

THE
ROMAN
CATHOLIC
CHURCH
IN ITALY
—
ALEXANDER
ROBERTSON, D.D.



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THE
ROMAN CATHOLIC
CHURCH
IN ITALY.



TRANSLATION OF LETTER FROM
KING VICTOR EMMANUEL III.

MINISTRY OF THE
ROYAL HOUSE.

ROME, 19th January 1903.

His Majesty the King has received, together with your letter, the copy that you have offered him in homage, of your work, entitled "The Roman Catholic Church in Italy."

I am gratified to be able to inform you that His Majesty has been pleased to accord to your kind gift a flattering reception, and to perceive in it a new proof of the sentiments of constant sympathy that you show for Italy and the Royal Family.

His Majesty has, therefore, charged me to thank you particularly for your courteous gift, and in discharging this duty I take the opportunity of assuring you, Rev. Signor Cavaliere, of my cordial esteem.

The Minister,

E. PONZIO VAGLIA.

To the Rev. Signor

CAV. DR. ALEXANDER ROBERTSON,

Scottish Evangelical Minister, VENICE.



MINISTERO DELLA R. CASA

DIVISIONE PRIMA

Roma, li 19 gennaio 1903.

N.° 771. È pervenuto a Sua Maestà il Re, insieme con la lettera di V. S., l'esemplare che Ella Gli destinava in omaggio della propria pubblicazione intitolata "The Roman Catholic Church in Italy".
Mi torna ora gradito informarla che Sua Maestà si è compiaciuto fare alla gentile offerta una lusinghiera accoglienza, e ravvisare in essa una novella prova dei sentimenti di costante simpatia che Ella professa per l'Italia e la Real Famiglia.

La Maestà Sua mi ha quindi incaricato di ringraziare distintamente V. S. pel cortese invio, ed io adempio tale ufficio confermandole, Reverendo Signore Cavaliere, la mia particolare osservanza.

Al Reverendo Signore
Car. Dott. Alessandro Robertson
Ministro evangelico scozzese
Venezia.

Il Ministro
G. Bongiorno

IL PRESIDENTE

CONSIGLIO DEI MINISTRI

TRANSLATION OF LETTER FROM THE
PREMIER OF ITALY.

THE PRESIDENT
OF THE
COUNCIL OF MINISTERS.

ROME, 20th February 1903.

MOST REV. SIR,

I have received, through the Rev. Cav. Fera, your recent book, "The Roman Catholic Church in Italy," and also your former ones, "Fra Paolo Sarpi," and "The Bible of St. Mark," works which you have had the kindness to send me in courteous gift. These truly splendid volumes, and the subjects they treat of, demonstrate how lively is the affection which you have for Italy—for its progress, for its greatness, and for its independence from the domination of the Vatican; and it is for Italy a thing extremely gratifying that so many choice minds and hearts in foreign lands should cherish for her a love so warm and so efficacious. To this love which you nourish for my country, I owe the kind thought that prompted you to favour me with your scholarly works, which I prize most highly, and your study of Sarpi has for me, a citizen of Brescia, a special value, as that city gave to the great Venetian his most eminent disciple, Fulgenzio Micanzio.

Accept, therefore, the sentiments of my lively gratitude, together with those of the most cordial devotion, with which I am pleased to subscribe myself.

Yours most obediently,

G. ZANARDELLI.

Roma 20. febbrajo 903

Reverendissimo signore

Ho ricevuto per mezzo del Rev.

Car. Ferr il suo recente libretto: The Roman Catholic Church in Italy, e i precedenti su Fra Paolo Sarpi e The Bible of St. Mark, scritti che Ella ebbe la bontà di voler inviarmi in dono gentile. Due' volumi veramente splendidi, gli argomenti che trattano, dimostrano quanto sia veramente vivo l'affetto che Ella porta all'Italia, alle sue sorti, alle sue grandezze, alla sua indipendenza dal predominio del Vaticano; e per l'Italia

è così grandemente lusinghiera che ogni e ogni eletto delle nostre contrade abbiano per essa un amore così caldo ed efficace. A questo amore che Ella nutre per la mia patria io devo la gentile benedizione che la mossa a favorirmi i miei dotti lavori che mi sono carissimi, e lo Fabrizio Sarpi ha tanto maggior valore per il cittadino di Brescia per averla data al grande veneziano il più eminente discepolo: Fulgenzio Micunzio.
Grazie pertanto i sentimenti della mia viva gratitudine e quelli insieme della più cordiale dedizione, alla quale ho dato tutto
uno affezionato
G. Zanardelli

THE ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH IN ITALY.

BY

ALEXANDER ROBERTSON, D.D.

CAVALIERE OF THE ORDER OF ST. MAURICE
AND ST. LAZARUS, ITALY.

Author of

"FRA PAOLO SARPI"; "THE BIBLE OF ST MARK"
"CATHOLIC REFORM"; etc. etc.

THIRD EDITION.

"A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit. . . .
Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them."

LONDON: MORGAN AND SCOTT,

OFFICE OF "The Christian"

12, PATERNOSTER BUILDINGS, E.C.

1903

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PREFACE

IT has been nobly said that "there is no wealth but life"; and, as our Lord has said, "I am come that they might have life," the true test to apply to a professedly Christian Church is its effect upon life. Does it make life fuller, richer, stronger, nobler, happier, more beautiful, more hopeful, more godlike; or does it make life poorer, emptier, weaker, meaner, gloomier, less human, less divine? This is the test that I have applied in my book to the Roman Catholic Church in Italy. I have not regarded it from a doctrinal or from a ceremonial stand-point, but I have had regard solely to the characteristic form of life it develops and in which it embodies itself. I have asked, What is its effect upon the mind and heart, the soul and being of the individual Italian, and of the Italian nation? I have not asked how it affects their outward circumstances, because that is dependent on the way it affects their life. I have found the answer to my question, in the feelings the Roman Catholic Church

excites towards itself, in the hearts of the people ; in the way it compels them to speak of it—of its Head, of its priests, of its religious services, of its doings amongst the people in general ; and in the way it has constrained them to act towards it. I have found my answer in the attitude the Italian Government has had to assume towards it, and in the way it has been forced to deal with it, by placing on the statute-book of the realm new laws touching the Church's influence on the personal, the social, the political, and the national life of the people.

These feelings and words, these actions and laws, I have recorded in the pages of my book. I have obtained my knowledge of them, during a long residence in Italy, from many and from varied sources—from conversations with representative men of all classes, clerical and lay, from the daily press, from the addresses and speeches of public men, from the writings of scholars, and from what is said and done in the Italian Parliament.

In doing this I have not obtruded my own opinion, although I do not hide from myself the fact that I have not concealed it, for the Roman Catholic Church affects me, a resident and a worker in Italy, exactly as it affects the bulk of the people ; and if I had been in the House of Deputies when the Church laws now in force were under discussion, there is not one that would not have received my

strenuous support, for none of them touch the question of religious liberty, but only the Church's influence upon life.

Now, I am aware that the way the Italians regard the Roman Catholic Church is very different from the way in which it is regarded by the people of Great Britain and America. But I ask them to remember that the Italians have had a much longer experience of the Roman Catholic Church than they have had, and at much closer quarters. The Head of the Church is in their Capital, and in his palace is the machinery that sets in motion and regulates all the movements of the Church in its remotest parts and members. Indeed, the Roman Catholic Church and Italy have long been almost identified in the minds of many people the world over. When they think of the one, they think of the other. And I further ask, Ought not English-speaking people to reflect that probably, for the reasons I have stated, the Italian way of looking at the Roman Catholic Church may be the right way? And ought not the British Government to reflect that probably Italian statesmen may have chosen the right way to deal with it in their legislation?

These questions seem to me worthy of serious consideration, for the Roman Catholic Church is a factor in the life of many of the subjects of King Edward at home and abroad; and, if not in England

and in Scotland, yet in Ireland, in Malta, and in some parts of Canada, it determines to a large extent their collective life. That life is in its tone and character what the Roman Catholic Church makes it. And not only is the Roman Catholic Church thus an active factor, making or marring, ennobling or debasing individual and national life, but it is one constantly operative, and increasingly operative; not through Englishmen and Scotsmen joining its ranks, but through the present attitude of the bulk of the people and of our rulers toward it; and because of its importation of legions of foreign adherents.

My object in writing this book is twofold. In the first place, I wish to help to extend amongst English-speaking people a knowledge of how the Roman Catholic Church is regarded by the Italian people and Government, as affecting their individual and national life. I believe knowledge of this kind is wanted and sought for. Here in Venice I am constantly asked by travellers to furnish it by speech and lecture; and I am also frequently requested to write on the subject, and to allow articles I have written in English and American newspapers to be republished for a wider circulation.

My second object is to persuade people to view the Roman Catholic Church as the Italians view it. I am convinced that it is the true and right way, the wise and prudent way, of looking at it. Italy,

in the unparalleled progress it has made in life since it was born thirty-two years ago, has learned much from England, and has copied England in many things; England may well learn from Italy, and copy Italy in this matter. Sooner or later, I am sure, it will have to do so; for it is not a thing that touches merely the means of living, the circumstances and accidents of life, but it touches directly life itself—the life of the individual and the life of the nation.

ALEXANDER ROBERTSON.

Ca' STRUAN, VENICE,
Jan. 1903.

PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION

THE reviews of this book which have appeared in the press, the many letters regarding it which I have received from both friends and strangers, and the fact that a Second Edition is already called for, lead me to hope that the objects which I had in view in writing it, as stated in the preceding Preface, are being largely secured.

In Italy the book has been received with unqualified approval. Indeed, the highest in authority have written to me in commendation of it—King Victor Emmanuel; the Premier, Cavaliere G. Zanar-

delli; and the Minister of Public Instruction, Commendatore D. Nasi. By all it is recognised as being historically accurate in its description both of the past and of the present influence of the Roman Catholic Church on the individual and national life of the people. And Italy is the true touchstone to apply to the Church. If that Church is capable of accomplishing any good, it is here in Italy that it should be seen.

In this edition some verbal errors have been corrected, and a few fresh facts given. I have also added an Index, which many readers believe will increase the usefulness of the book.

ALEXANDER ROBERTSON.

CA' STRUAN, VENICE,
May 1903.

PREFACE TO THE THIRD EDITION

IT is to me an extremely gratifying fact that the Second Edition of this work was entirely bought up before its issue from the press. In revising for this Third Edition, so quickly called for, I have not found it necessary to depart in any way from the text of the preceding one.

ALEXANDER ROBERTSON.

CA' STRUAN, VENICE,
June 1903.

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THE ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH IN ITALY



I

An Historic Retrospect

"An Object Lesson"

AN Irish bishop once said to me, "I, for one, never desired the overthrow of the Pope's temporal power; for, as long as that lasted, the world possessed in Italy an object lesson of the degradation to which a dominant Roman Catholic Church reduces a country and a people." Undoubtedly Italy did present such an object lesson, and it was an advantage to the world to have it before its eyes; for, whenever questions regarding the real character and the real work of the Roman Catholic Church were raised, it was so easy, and so conclusive, to end all controversy by pointing to Italy.

But what of the Italian people? It would have been rather hard on them if, in order to point a

moral, they had been retained even for a day longer than could be helped under conditions of life so intolerable that, Cavour said, "they called for European intervention." On September 20, 1870, when the Italian troops entered Rome, by the breach they made in its walls near Porta Pia, the Italians did not think their deliverance had come a day too soon. They believed that they had been "made a spectacle unto the world, and to angels and to men," long enough!

But though everything in Italy has now changed for the better, though now at last

". the dream of Italy
Is now a dream no longer, and the night
Is over, with its beacons in the dark,"

still the sad aspect she wore under Papal rule ought not to be forgotten. There is little danger of Italy's sons forgetting it, for it is graven upon the table of their heart as "with an iron pen and lead in the rock for ever," and it is written in letters of blood in the chronicles of the kingdom. Nor need the world forget it, for Italy's history is bound up with that of all civilised nations; the crimes of the Church against Italy were, as Mazzini was never wearied of showing, crimes against humanity. Further, as "the roots of the present lie deep in the past," it is impossible to understand the present, in many cases, without a reference to it.

"If we tried
To sink the past beneath our feet, be sure
The future would not stand."

And this is emphatically so with the subject now under consideration—the Roman Catholic Church in Italy. The character of that Church is, of course, unchanged, it is *semper eadem*; but its legal status, and the attitude and conduct of the people towards it, have their explanation in a marked degree in their past experience of it. Before, then, entering upon the study of our subject, and in order the better to understand it, let us glance briefly at the past; let us call up and read the Irish bishop's "Object Lesson."

If we take a map of Italy drawn out any time before 1860, we shall see that there was then no "Kingdom of Italy." That watchword and battle-cry was, as Prince Metternich had said some few years before, but a "geographical expression." The whole land was broken up into a number of small states. In the north there were Piedmont, Lombardy, Venetia, Genoa, Parma, Modena, and Tuscany; in the centre there were those of the Church, consisting of six Legations and thirteen Delegations; and in the south there were Naples and Sicily. Two of these were kingdoms: Piedmont, whose rulers, of the ancient House of Savoy, ever since the acquisition of the Island of Sardinia in 1702, bore the title of Kings of Sardinia; and Naples and Sicily, which formed the kingdom of the Two Sicilies, under Bourbon rulers. The Papal States were governed by ecclesiastics—the Legations by cardinals, and the Delegations by prelates. The other states were

Grand Duchies and Duchies, ruled by princes and by dukes.

All of these states were independent of each other, and often existed in a state of mutual jealousy and hostility. But they all had, with the exception of Piedmont, this in common, that their rulers, who were irresponsible tyrants, and who kept their thrones against the will of the people, by the aid of foreign soldiery, were all tied neck and heel to the steps of the Papal throne. All these fragments of Italy were really only fiefs, or appanages of the Papacy. The Pope and the priest ruled absolutely in the Papal States. There it was a government of priests, *un governo teocratico* (a Theocratic government), as the Italians called it. And they directed the policy of, and practically ruled in the other states as well, even in Venetia and Lombardy, which were under Austria. And as Prince Metternich, himself but the agent of the Pope, said, "The worst of it is the Church does not know how to govern." The condition of the people was deplorable. It was not equally so in all the states, but, outside Piedmont, it was only a matter of degree.

I happen to possess an earthquake map of Italy. Black is the colour used to indicate places liable to seismic disturbances. The whole country is so coloured, excepting one little spot, and as gradations of colour are used to indicate places more or less affected, the colour grows in intensity towards the south, until, around Naples, it becomes one of pitchy

blackness. Such a map, I think, very strikingly illustrates the condition of Italy at this time. Its dark colouring, overspreading the whole land, with the exception of one little white spot in its north-west corner, which may stand for Piedmont, indicates its condition materially, intellectually, morally, and spiritually. Only the area of its pitchy blackness must be widened to include, not only Naples, but all the Papal States, and, if possible, the colour must be intensified and concentrated at one spot, and that spot Rome—Rome, then “the least Italian of all Italian cities.”

Dr. Arnold of Rugby, in one of the letters he wrote home during an Italian tour, said: “We have just crowned the summit, and see before us the country towards Rome, and the streams going to the Tiber. The valley of the Paglia for miles lies before us. Alas! to think of that unhappy Papal government, and of the degraded people subject to it.” And in another letter he says: “It is almost awful to look at the overwhelming beauty around me, and then think of moral evil. It seems as if heaven and hell, instead of being separated by a great gulf fixed from one another, were absolutely on each other’s confines, and indeed not far from every one of us.” Beauty of nature and human deformity. Every prospect pleasing, and only man was vile. Italy, “the garden of the world, the home of all art yields and nature can decree,” was, under the government of the Church, to use the words of Niebuhr, “a land of

the dead," or, to use those of Gino Capponi, "a garden of Eden, without the tree of knowledge and without the tree of life."

There was a phrase used to describe the Papal government, which is current to this day, namely, that they governed by the "Three Fs," which stood for *farina*, *feste*, *forche*, that is, flour, festivals, and the gallows, or food, amusements, and the hangman. This popular description was true as far as it went. A crushing poverty, that had to be relieved at intervals by alms from rich religious houses, was the normal condition of things, as I shall show farther on. Festivals were constantly recurring, when amusements were provided for the people to distract their minds from serious things—wild carnival orgies took place in their season; there was horse-racing and hunting around Rome; and the theatres, open nearly all the year round, were heavily subsidised, and men were compelled to attend them, as they were compelled to attend mass, if they wished to escape being apprehended as political suspects. Popular risings occasionally took place, when the gallows did their work. At such times the Pope was accustomed to leave his mercenary foreign soldiers a free hand to burn, plunder, and murder as they pleased in the disaffected district; and so it often happened, as at Perugia in 1859, houses were looted, old men and children massacred, and women and girls insulted and killed. The Pope was so pleased with the

thorough way in which his orders had been carried out at Perugia that he personally thanked the infamous leader, General Schmidt, and caused a medal to be struck, as was done after the massacre of St. Bartholomew, to commemorate the event. After every insurrection, to use the words of Adolphus Trollope, the punishment inflicted "studded the country with gibbets, crowded the galleys with prisoners, and filled Europe with exiles, and almost every other home in the Papal States with mourning."

To quote again from Dr. Arnold's letters, I find him writing from Naples the following words, which read like a commentary on the *farina*, *feste*, and *forche* theory. He says: "Here we actually are looking out upon what but presents images which, with a very little play of fancy, might all be shaped into a fearful drama of Pleasure, Sin, and Death." Arnold was glad to get away, for when he reached Bologna he wrote: "And now this is the last night, I trust, in which I shall sleep in the Pope's dominions, for it is impossible not to be sickened with a government such as this, which discharges no one function decently. . . . Where, then, can there be hope under such a system, so contrived, as it should seem, for every evil end, and so necessarily exclusive of good?" And Lord Macaulay bears the same testimony: "Corruption," he says, "infects all public offices. Old women above, liars and cheats below—that is Papal administration. The States of the Pope

are, I suppose, the worst governed in the civilised world." "The strong and too true expression," which Mr. Gladstone tells us he often heard in Naples applied to the Bourbon government, was equally applicable to the Pope's, "This is the negation of God created into a system of government"; and equally applicable are Mr. Gladstone's own strong and true words: it is "an outrage upon religion, upon civilisation, upon humanity, and upon decency." Or, to quote the words of two of Italy's greatest sons—Count Cavour said, "Misrule crushed out every generous instinct as sacrilege or high treason"; and Baron Ricasoli, who succeeded him as Premier in 1861, and who was again Premier in 1866, described the Papal Court, the soul and centre and heart of the Pope's theocratic government, as "an abominable and rotten bier."

Let us now look at some of the outstanding features of the Papal government.

PATRIOTISM WAS THE GREATEST CRIME.—The words which Mrs. Hamilton King puts into the lips of Jacopo Ruffini were no exaggeration—

". It is death
To speak the very name of Italy
To this Italian people, therefore we die."

Gavazzi, years before he broke with the Papacy, and, ceasing to be a Barnabite friar, became a Christian pastor, was accustomed in his sermons to speak of "Italy." This was reported at headquarters, when he was forbidden under pains and

penalties ever to mention the name. English newspapers were not allowed to be circulated, as they breathed the spirit of freedom; and the Duke of Parma, Charles III., brought his riding-whip across the face of a man in the street from whose pocket he saw a Piedmontese newspaper projecting. I am not aware that there was published in Rome a daily newspaper before the year 1846. Previous to that time there only existed one weekly and one bi-weekly journal. From 1846 onwards several appeared, but they were all subject to Papal censorship and reflected only Papal opinion; and as such, they gave more space to the affairs of India and Japan than to those of Europe, and had no intelligence of contemporary politics.

English travellers were watched lest they should infect the people with liberal ideas, and any reference to England, as a land whose institutions were models to be copied, was treason. Associations of all kinds were forbidden as "hurtful to the State, because they enlightened the people, and spread liberal ideas." Mr. Bolton King tells how "a catechism, founded on Bossuet, was burnt because it contained a reference to love of country," and that "when Giotto's portrait of Dante was discovered in the Bargello, the colours were altered in the repainting lest they should suggest the revolutionary tricolour," the Italian national flag, red, white, and green. The *sbirri*, the Papal police, those "locusts of the State" as the people called

them, existed, not for the maintenance of decency and public order, of which there was little throughout the Papal States, and none in Rome, but for political purposes, for the detection and crushing out of every liberal and patriotic aspiration. Gas was forbidden to be used, and all lights had to be extinguished at a certain hour of the night, on the ground that men might be discussing politics and plotting for freedom. Men were lashed for singing patriotic songs. It was forbidden to teach Italian history in the universities and schools.

THERE WAS NO PERSONAL LIBERTY.—An infamous system of espionage, like a great network, overspread the whole country, and its meshes were closest and strongest in Rome and in the Papal States. Not a man, not a woman, not a child, but was entangled in it. The *sbirri*, who levied blackmail on all, were everywhere, and cardinals, archbishops, bishops, priests, servant-girls, bravoës, thieves, idlers, and vagabonds of all sorts acted as spies, the latter classes often earning their livelihood, at the rate of two francs a day, in that way.

Most men were on the police lists of suspects, and many were under police surveillance, which obliged them not to quit their town or village, to be indoors from sunset to sunrise, to go to confession once a month, and to go for a certain number of days "into retreat" every year in a monastery. The sanctity of the home was constantly liable to be violated, as the Papal police could enter any house

at any hour of the day or of the night. Any one was liable to be arrested at the nod of a priest, without warrant and without warning, and to be thrown into prison. If a boy in the Papal States had been asked if he had been in prison, he would have answered, "I am not yet a man, or I should have been." No sick or dying person was permitted to see a physician until he had first seen a priest and taken the sacrament. All wills were invalidated which did not contain legacies to the Church, and once a good fat legacy was secured, the priest, so Italians tell me, often took care the sick person should not recover to rescind it. In administering the Viaticum, it is said, the priest would accidentally rest his elbow too heavily on the patient's breast, or press his thumbs on the patient's throat.

THERE WAS NO JUSTICE. — Those thrown into prison were liable to lie there for any length of time without trial, waiting, as the phrase ran, "till the truth came out," ignorant both as to who their accusers were, and what was the crime charged against them. And what those prisons were in Naples the world knows through Mr. Gladstone's letters to the Earl of Aberdeen, written in April 1851, and the prisons in Rome and throughout the Papal States were no better. They were full of sewage, rats, and vermin. The people called them "gulfs of hell," and into them prisoners were huddled together without regard to age or sex or social status. Many died in them of hardship,

starvation, and jail-fever; and many were put to death secretly. Perhaps these were happier than those brought to trial, for the courts of justice were centres of injustice and of unheard-of cruelties. The judges were all ecclesiastics, corrupt, incapable, vicious, who conducted the cases with closed doors, and, to quote Mr. Stillman in his *Union of Italy*, "setting aside all law, gave sentence according to their theological prejudice, and every offence against common morality was ignored, in view of the anxiety to suppress offences against the Church." Dr. Arnold said: "When you see a judge or a public functionary, justice and integrity may be utter strangers to his vocabulary;" and Mr. Gladstone's charge against the priest-judges in Naples held equally of all throughout the land: "It is not mere imperfection, not corruption in low quarters, not occasional severity; it is incessant, systematic, deliberate violation of the law by the Power appointed to watch over and maintain it. It is such violation of human and written law as this, carried on for the purpose of violating every other law, unwritten and eternal, human and divine; it is the wholesale prosecution of virtue when united with intelligence, operating upon such a scale that entire classes may with truth be said to be its object."

PRISONERS WERE TORTURED AND DRUGGED. — Instruments of torture, the lash, and prison hardships and privations of all kinds, were used to extort confessions. Men were dosed with belladonna so

that they might betray themselves unwittingly. As Mr. Stillman says, they were given “drugs which produced delirium in the patient, whose ravings were recorded as testimony against him.” Condemnation was invariably the outcome of a trial, when many were executed, many sent to the galleys, and many were doomed to imprisonment, with their bodies weighted with iron, their legs chained together, or they themselves chained up to the walls of their cells, for life. Gavazzi, who was the first to enter the dungeons of the Inquisition in the Castle of St. Angelo, in 1870, after the taking of Rome, and many others who entered afterwards, such as Pianciani, Gaiani, and Spada, have left their testimony that they saw there all kinds of instruments of torture and of death—irons, hooks, chafing-pans, ropes, quicklime, trap-doors over caverns and shafts (one described by Gavazzi being seventy feet deep); whilst the remains of the human victims themselves, of all ages and of both sexes, consisting of hair, bones, skulls, and skeletons, were seen in dungeon, cellar, and shaft.

PEOPLE OF PROVED INNOCENCE WERE EXECUTED.—Mr. Stillman, who was in Rome at the time, tells us how “one day a collision accidentally took place between the police and the populace, in the course of which a priest was stabbed, not fatally. The police failed to discover the author of the wound, but found amongst the persons arrested an exile who had secretly returned to visit his

friends. No proof of complicity was produced against him, but being tried by the Papal Court he was condemned to death, and executed, in spite of the evidence of an alibi which he brought forward. It was necessary, they said, to make an example."

I must here mention another case still more lamentable, because it involved the death of three innocent men, and still more notorious, because it is occupying the attention of the whole of Italy at the present time. Whilst I write I have papers dated May 1902 on my desk which treat of it, under the heading "*Fasti del Governo Papale—I Martiri di Fermo*" (Records of the Papal Government—The Martyrs of Fermo). The story is as follows:—

At Fermo, a city in the Marches, some fifty miles south of Ancona, on a night in February 1849, a canon of the Church, named Michele Corsi, was mortally wounded. The Cardinal of the Legation was De Angelis, who, unprincipled and ferocious, more than his compeers merited Pellegrino's description, "a prince at Rome, a pasha in the province." He at once arrested two vagabonds, Testori and Smerilli, and three innocent young men, Ignazio Rosettani, Enrico Venezia, and Guiseppe Caselini. These three were of good family, rich, generous, patriotic, popular, and it was they he wanted to strike. He played the vagabond Testori against them, telling him that they were his accusers, and that if he could implicate them his

life would be spared. Testori thereupon swore that they were his accomplices. The citizens of the town were horrified, but feared nothing, knowing that it was impossible to prove them guilty.

The trial day came on. Rosettani and Venezia produced witnesses and documents conclusively showing their innocence, and Caselini showed that on the night of the assassination he was in bed with fever, as was testified by the doctor who attended him, the chemist who supplied the medicines, and his friends and servants. For giving their testimony these were all thrown into prison.

Then, on December 22, 1854,—that is, five years all but two months after their arrest, during which years Cardinal de Angelis had played with his victims like a tiger with its prey,—by the sentence of the *Sacra Consulta* all five men were condemned to death. One night in May a father-confessor, a Jesuit, appeared in the cell of Testori, when for the first time he realised that the promise made to him was not to be kept, but that he was to die. He instantly called for the Marquis Trevisan, an aged citizen of seventy-four, eminent and good, and in his presence and that of the confessor formally declared that the three young men were entirely innocent, and he explained how he had been betrayed into accusing them. The Marquis, horrified, begged the confessor to go with him to the Cardinal, but the Jesuit replied that he was there to receive confessions, not declarations of that kind. On May

23, 1854, the three innocent men, with the two guilty ones, were executed.

Ten years afterwards, in 1864, when Fermo and the Marches were free from Papal rule, the patriotic Societies of the province removed the remains of the three unfortunate men from the unconsecrated ground outside the town in which they were buried, and, carrying them in solemn procession to the chief cemetery in Fermo, buried them there, raising over their graves a marble monument, which bears an eloquent inscription lauding them as martyrs. Thirty-eight years passed away, and then, in the month of May 1902, the people erected a second monument to them on the front of the Council Chamber, in the central square of the town, the *Piazza Vittorio Emanuele*, which monument of bronze and marble bears conspicuously their names, with the symbolic palm of martyrdom. All documents bearing upon the case are being carefully collected in the city archives for preservation and ready inspection.

Thus, as the newspapers say, "the noble city of Fermo glorifies worthily the memory of three unhappy victims of the Theocratic government." No wonder that Pope Pio Nono was denounced as "the jailer and the butcher of Italy"; indeed, Cavour said that it was to him a source of satisfaction that he appeared as the butcher and not as the victim of his country. It enabled him "to appeal to the moral sense of Europe against the monster."

THERE WAS NO EDUCATION.—One could have walked a long summer's day from parish to parish, or have been driven, for that matter, from province to province throughout the Papal dominions, without meeting a human being who could read, except the priests, and even their education was of the most miserable description. A priest still living has assured me that he knew not only brother-priests, but bishops, who could hardly read their services, or talk anything but *patois*. And such men were the instructors of the people—the professors in the universities and the teachers in the schools. Education was entirely in their hands. In many parishes there were no schools at all. In no parish was there a girls' school. As Adolphus Trollope, in his *Life of Pio Nono* tells us, the priests said, “It was *una cosa vergognosa* (a shameful thing) for a girl to be able to write—she might write love-letters.” As I purpose treating the subject of *Education* in a separate chapter, I need not say more about it here, except to add that these priest-teachers had mottoes worthy of themselves and their work, such as, “Tolerate vice, and proscribe thought ;” “Keep the people ignorant, they are easier to govern ;” “Destroy the class called thinkers.”

THERE WAS NO SANITATION.—Rome was a dust-heap and worse. Its streets were often impassable. A writer in *Blackwood's Magazine* for June 1902, in an article giving “Roman Reminiscences of nearly

half a century ago," says of Rome: "The dirt of the streets was something appalling. The Corso and principal thoroughfares were occasionally swept, generally at the most inconvenient moment, when crowded with people, at the fashionable hour. I once suggested that it would be better to sweep in the morning, when the streets were empty. 'What would be the use of that?' was the reply; 'nobody would see we had done it.' The state of the narrow side-streets was fearful, all the dirt was swept into them; in the evening everything was brought out of the houses and thrown on the huge dust-heaps, to the great delight and enjoyment of the cats and the homeless dogs, which, like those in Constantinople, wandered wild about the city. . . . There were a few gas-lamps in the Corso; in the side-streets none. One's servant always carried a lantern. The entrance, even to very good houses, was usually filthy; no porter, no light on the dirty stairs. It was not uncommon for Englishmen to be robbed and stabbed in those dark, lonely streets."

In such a state of matters one is not surprised to learn that epidemics swept thousands to their graves. Smallpox was rampant, for Pope Leo XII. "abolished the magistracy which had the care of vaccination, and repealed their regulations." In the Foundling Hospitals in Rome (and there were more of them in that city of celibates than in any three cities in Europe put together) "nine

infants out of ten died of starvation." Monasteries and nunneries were reeking with infection, for monks and nuns were incorrigibly dirty. Gregory XVI., who was the predecessor of Pio Nono, was, before his election as Pope, a monk of the order of Camaldoli. Adolphus Trollope knew him personally in Rome, and, in his *Life of Pio Nono*, referring to him, he says: "And the sordid habits of the Camaldolese monk had been in no way exorcised by the tiara. He was excessively dirty, and the entirety of his bearing, his voice, mode of utterance, and the words he spoke, were in perfect keeping with his external appearance." Except when in gala dress, the cleanliness foreign to the Pope was almost equally foreign to all the cardinals and *monsignori*, not to say the whole army of priests and monks and nuns. The Duke of Sermoneta, who was a friend of King Victor Emmanuel, is reported to have said: "Every insect, generally speaking, lives in water or in air; nuns, however, are insects who can live without water and without air. I am sure of this, for my sister is a nun."

There was no proper system of drainage even in Rome, and there were few cities, few towns, or even villages in the Papal States that had an adequate and convenient supply of good drinking water. And even when these things began to mend in many parts of the country, the saying was that all "public improvements stopped short at Rome, and in its immediate neighbourhood."

COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY WERE DISCOURAGED.—Commerce was hampered by the divers weights and measures that were in use throughout the country. In the Papal States these differed in every province. The coins, too, that were in circulation in one place were not legal tender in another. These difficulties were not wholly accidental, they were part of the Papal policy to hinder ready and rapid intercourse. Then each separate state, and not unfrequently each town, had its own protective duties and troublesome custom-houses. All shops and offices, excepting the drink-shop and the lottery-office, were compulsorily closed on Saints' days and Church festivals, which too frequently occurred twice and thrice in a week.

In the same way all industrial enterprises were similarly hampered by heavy taxation and clerical interference and restrictions. The Papal Church dreaded the rise of industries and manufactories and big businesses, fearing that the employers of labour might get power into their hands over their workmen and shopmen, and so become the rivals of the priest. The Cardinal Legates had the power to impose taxation without let or hindrance, and the people had no voice in the matter. It was the prerogative of the cardinal to impose, and the duty of the people, without murmuring, to pay. And the utmost farthing was relentlessly exacted.

There were few roads. In hundreds of com-

munes there were no roads at all. In 1863 a Parliamentary Commission reported that ninety-one communes in the Basilicata, ninety-two in the province of Catanzaro, sixty in that of Teramo, and one thousand three hundred and twenty-one Neapolitan communes were in that deplorable condition. And even where there were carriage-roads or cart-roads, these were so badly kept that, in winter and in times of heavy rains, they became almost impassable. As for railways, the Pope could not bear the thought of them. He forbade their construction in the interests of the Church; for, to quote the words of Mr. Bolton King, "they would be sure to work harm to religion, and might bring up deputations of provincial malcontents"; or, as Adolphus Trollope says, "Steam engines and their works are incompatible with Papal pretensions and purposes." Ferdinand of Naples (Bomba), who was a licentious tyrant, thought "tunnels were demoralising."

AGRICULTURE WAS AT A STAND-STILL.—I need not say no farm machinery was permitted, and the implements that were in use were of the most primitive description. One-handled wooden ploughs were in general use, and the grain was reaped and threshed by hand, or trodden out under the feet of mules and donkeys. All agricultural societies were at first discouraged, and then prohibited. A veto was practically put on all agricultural improvements. There was not one acre of ground in the

Papal States properly cultivated, whilst whole tracts of country belonging to prelates and religious houses were left undrained and untilled, and became malarious swamps and desert wastes. Trees were ruthlessly cut down, and no replanting took place, which naturally created two sore evils—periods of drought, and frequent inundations, when the rivers came down in flood, overflowing their banks, after excessive rains or the melting of the snows on the mountains.

But, as Mr. Bolton King says: “The climax was reached in the desolate solitudes of the malaria-smitten Agro-Romano, which stretched along the coast-line southwards from Civita Vecchia. Here the great Roman families, whose estates stretched to portentous magnitude in Italian eyes, had their patrimonies (Prince Borghese owned 100,000 acres). The land, naturally fertile, but almost valueless through neglect, was let at very low rents in huge farms. . . . What had once been the centre of Roman civilisation was now the home of a few ragged and fever-stricken herdsmen. Migrant labourers came in gangs from the hills in harvest-time, the high wages overcoming the terror of the malaria, which decimated their ranks, and made the work a fearful lottery. In spite of its native richness, the average produce was one-third of that of Romagna, and the population of the province of Civita Vecchia was thirty-five to the square mile.” That part of the Agro-Romano, or of the Roman

Campagna, as it is commonly called, which encircles Rome, was purposely retained by the Popes in a state as pestilential and malaria-breeding as possible, that it might thus be a defence for them against the approach of an enemy. Yes, what Adolphus Trollope said a quarter of a century ago holds almost equally true to-day : "To the traveller leaving Lombardy or Tuscany behind him, his course across the 'Apostolic Dominions' affords a lesson, which he that runs even by rail cannot miss reading, of the results of Papal sovereignty."

POVERTY, PAUPERISM, AND BEGGARY ABOUNDED.
—Thousands and tens of thousands in the Papal States lived in a condition of poverty and destitution that verged on starvation. Indeed, hundreds and tens of hundreds actually died from lack of proper food, clothing, and housing. Adolphus Trollope tells us that at Imola, in the time of Pope Pío Nono, of which town indeed he was bishop before he was raised to the pontificate, "there were a great number of abandoned children, who passed the days and nights on the steps of the churches and other public buildings, holding out the hand of beggary to the passer-by, and, amid the surroundings of so abject a life, lost to every sentiment of morality and decency. There is no reason to believe that Imola, a comparatively small city in the midst of an agricultural district, could have been worse in this respect than the other cities of the Peninsula generally. Beggary is, in truth, the canker of all

of them, especially in the ex-Papal States." All travellers relate how Rome literally swarmed with beggars, who were an annoyance to them wherever they went. As Sismondi says: "All Rome wore either the tonsure, or livery, or rags"; or, as Lord Macaulay testifies, "It is hardly an exaggeration to say that the population seems to consist chiefly of foreigners, priests, and paupers." Thousands were publicly fed by daily doles of food given out of the overflowing presses and bursting barns of idle, luxurious, and profligate monks and nuns, whose wealth was drawn from the people's poverty. On New Year's Day 1848, the Pope's Council of Ministers, composed entirely of cardinals and monsignors, distributed in Rome 120,000 lbs. of bread and 30,000 lbs. of meat. When the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin was promulgated in December 1854, a distribution of the same kind took place. In Naples there were between forty and fifty thousand *lazzaroni*; that is to say, one-sixth of the entire population were paupers. These were attached to the Church and to the Throne by the gift of alms.

Lastly, BRIGANDAGE WAS PART AND PARCEL OF THE MACHINERY OF THE PAPAL CHURCH.—Brigandage was one of the crying evils from which Italy suffered under Papal rule. It was prevalent in many parts of the country, but mainly in the Papal States, and in the kingdom of the Two Sicilies, which, more than any other state in Italy, was an appanage of the

Papacy. It is difficult for us now to realise how widely spread and how dreadful the scourge of brigandage was. No road was safe for the traveller, by day or by night, without an escort. Indeed, as Bolton King mentions in his *History of Italian Unity*, trees had to be cut down by the roadsides to prevent the brigands taking shelter behind them. When the King of Prussia visited the south of Italy, some nine or ten thousand soldiers had to guard the roads to save him from capture. On one occasion they caught an audience at a theatre, and emptied every pocket. There was nothing they would not do in the way of robbery and murder. Hundreds of travellers lost their lives at their hands every year. Whole provinces were terrorised by them, the inhabitants paying them blackmail. The country house of Count Campello, the ex-Reformer, is in a little village called Arrone, in the Valnerina, amongst the mountains of Umbria. The nearest market town is Terni, about ten miles off. The Count has often told me how the peasants in his own and in the neighbouring villages were not safe in their own homes, and how, when they had occasion to go to Terni, they went in large companies, some of their number acting as an armed guard.

Then the dreadful thing was that this system of brigandage was practically, as I have said, part and parcel of the machinery of the Church. Pope and priest were united in an unholy alliance with the brigands. The monasteries often afforded them

shelter, and were their depots for arms and ammunition. A hunted brigand has been known to rush into a church, and when the police entered a few minutes afterwards he was nowhere to be seen. The priest had hastily thrown over him his saintly garments, and yielded to him his place at the altar, so that his pursuers failed to recognise him as he stood there saying mass. "Children," Mr. Bolton King says, "heard from the pulpit eulogies of devout highwaymen whom the saints protected." And again he says: "Brigandage was the fatal symptom of the rottenness with which all the fabric of Papal government was struck." The late Mr. Stillman of the *Times* in Rome says: "I myself one day witnessed a band of about two hundred brigands being driven across the frontier at Olevano, where they were feasted and fêted by the local Papal authorities, and, dispersing, found their way back again in a few days." And again he says: "The greatest difficulty arose from the brigandage of the Neapolitan provinces, openly encouraged and organised from the territory of the Pope, and subsidised by the King of Naples, who had his residence at Rome." The Papal police, the *sbirri*, protected them and helped them everywhere.

Yes, but I must go one step farther, and say that it sometimes happened that brigands were priests and priests were brigands. At the beginning of last century the head and leader of the brigands in the country south of Naples was Cardinal Fabrizio Ruffo; another brigand-priest, of whom many have heard,

through the well-known opera bearing his name, was Michele Pezza, or *Fra Diavolo*; a third was the Abbot Cesare; and a fourth, who terrorised the province of Foggia, was the priest Gaetano Vardarelli. Professor Nitti, in an article on "Brigandage" in the *Vita Italiana*, tells us that "the monks of Venafro prayed during the day, and did not disdain at night to infest the roads to assail travellers and to rob them."

These brigands were all eminently religious, or, I should rather say, superstitious. They were good Catholics, never going without their crosses and scapularies and images of the Madonna. Professor Nitti says: "The highwaymen who followed Cardinal Ruffo, before they began to sack and burn a city, and commit every most terrible cruelty, went to mass." Some brigands are said to have had such tender consciences that they have been known to pray to the Madonna to melt the hard heart of a traveller, that he might deliver up his purse, and save them from the sad necessity of shooting him.

Some years ago there died a famous brigand, called Giovanni Tolu, who has left us an account of the pious way in which he, as a "good Catholic," went about the murder of his victims. He says: "As we walked together, I prayed inwardly to the Blessed Virgin that she would illuminate my conscience, and reveal to me if my companion (in this case a certain Salvatore Moro) deserved to die. My conscience told me 'yes,' and I was tranquil. I then recom-

mended my own soul to the Lord, in case I might be overcome. I have never neglected these religious practices during the whole course of my life. Having killed Salvatore Moro by blowing his brains out, my first care was to reload my gun, leaning the butt-end of it upon his fallen body. I then recited an *Ave Maria* and a *Requiem* for the deceased. I have always killed the body but not the soul of my enemies; the soul I gave to God, therefore God should receive it; the body is of the earth, and to the earth it should return. Having recited my prayer, I took hold of the dead body by an arm and dragged it a little distance, and then let it fall into a crevice of a neighbouring rock. After this, with a tranquil mind, I continued my journey alone. Although a bandit, I never neglected my religious offices. I read always the office of the Blessed Virgin, I recited the prayers for morning and evening, I prayed for the dead, and I frequented the church and the confessional. The rector Dettori, of Florinas, conducted me into the church by a secret stair that communicated with it from his house. Whilst outside the *baracelli* (those who carry the bier) kept guard, I, the bandit, all alone with the priest, helped the priest at the mass and heard mass at the same time, and I confessed once a year."

All these brigands strove to make a pilgrimage to St. Peter's, Rome, once a year at Easter, when they confessed, and shared their spoils of robbery and murder with the Church. For what? For the

Pope's absolution, patronage, protection, and fatherly blessing. These things were given them, and thus the yearly balance between the Church and the brigands was struck and settled, and they were sent back again to their mountains and their forests to pursue with a clear conscience and a happy mind their infamous business. The late Dr. Howard Crosby says: "I have seen with my own eyes Gasparoni, the brigand chieftain, with his band of three hundred men, come down out of the mountains to get absolution, and then go back to their nefarious occupation. Afterward, when he was put in prison, it was said that it was because *he refused to divide longer with the Pope*. I had a talk with Gasparoni myself. He told me he had killed seventy-one men with his own hand in cold blood. Holding up his own cross before him, I asked him if he knew what that meant. He said that it meant that he was a Christian. 'But,' I said, 'how can you be that if you have murdered seventy-one people?' 'Oh,' he said, 'but I did not kill any of them on a Friday.'" They were men, as Samuel Rogers has said,

"most devout, though, when they kneel and pray,
With every bead they could recount a murder."

Sometimes the brigands taught priests, and even bishops, morality. A story is told of Angiolillo, a notorious brigand, finding a priest swearing and blaspheming in a towering passion. The brigand told him he was scandalised at his conduct, and com-

manded him to be quiet and to tell him his grievance. This he did, which was to the effect that his bishop had sold a parish living, to which he was entitled, to an undeserving priest for a large sum. Angiolillo went straight to the bishop, taxed him with his injustice, and made him cancel the appointment and induct the right man—his blaspheming friend. He then went to the expelled priest, who was rich, and made him give him two hundred and fifty ducats as a fine for having corrupted the bishop.

When the Kingdom of Italy was at last formed, and consolidated, one of its earliest cares was to make war on brigandage. General Pinelli, who commanded the troops first sent for that purpose, has left an account of the arduous nature of his enterprise, and in this account occur these words: "The moral sense and patriotic sentiment of the Italians were exasperated at the infamous conduct of the Church in this matter." But the war, then begun, turned out to be a longer and more arduous one than any one anticipated. It has continued to the present time, for it was only in March 1903 that certain newspapers had a paragraph entitled "The End of Brigandage in Italy." The paragraph gave a notice of the trial and condemnation to penal servitude for life of two stalwart brigands, and told how, as they left the dock, the one dolefully said to the other, "*E dire che sotto i Papi eravamo funzionari dello Stato!*" (And to think that under the Popes we were functionaries of the State!)

Such is a brief sketch of the state of Italy and of that of the Italians under a dominant Pope and a dominant Roman Catholic Church. Such are the main features of the Irish bishop's "Object Lesson," which Italy, or at least the Papal parts of it, presented to the world up to 1870, declaring plainly to all what the Pope and the Papacy are when they have a free hand.

That the Papal Church is different now in Italy, or indeed in any other country where it exists, is not because it has changed, but because its power to reveal itself in its true character is more or less checked. A proof of this, so far as Italy is concerned, is afforded by the words of the Hon. Guiseppe Zanardelli, the present Premier of Italy. Addressing his constituents at Brescia a few years ago, he said: "The Church appears better than it once was. I no longer see in Rome what I used often to see in my young days, ladies driving about its streets with their coachmen and footmen in the liveries of their respective cardinals. Has this improvement come about because the Church is really growing better? Nothing of the kind. It is because the strong arm of the law checks the villainy of the priests."

A strange, sad proof of this is also afforded by the spectacle presented by the Papal parts of Ireland, on the testimony of Roman Catholics themselves. In a recent number of the *Tablet*, it is claimed that the priests are the governors of Ireland. "Ireland,"

it says, "is a Catholic country, the real constituents of it are the bishops and the priests. . . . The Irish members are in Parliament because the priests have sent them there. . . . The Irish priests are also the only priests in Europe or America who have such powers. . . . They can do in Ireland what the priests cannot do in France, Belgium, or Piedmont, and they do it openly in the face of the Government, and no man dares molest them."

Admitting this, let us now see the result of their government as set before us in Mr. Michael McCarthy's *Five Years in Ireland*. We find two of our three Italian Fs in full vigour. It is a government of *farina* and *feste*, of flour and festivals, of food and amusements. He says: "In the Mullingar Union it was discovered by the Board of Guardians that outdoor relief to the extraordinary amount of two shillings and threepence per head of the population was given out;" whereas it is under twopence per head in the Protestant part. Mullingar he describes as "a central point" in the Roman Catholic part of Ireland, and therefore it is fairly representative of the condition of the country ruled by the priests. Ruled thus by food-doles, it is ruled also by amusements. After telling us that in the *North-Eastern Diamond*—that is, in the Protestant part—"there is practically no racing and no hunting," he goes on to say: "But in the 'Rest of Ireland' there is more racing—steeple-chasing, flat-racing, point to point-racing; and more hunting

—fox-hunting, hare-hunting, both with harriers and beagles, stag-hunting, otter-hunting, and coursing, both hare-coursing with greyhounds and rabbit coursing with terriers—than in any other country of the same size and population, I shall not say in existence, but that was ever heard of.”

The third F, the *forche*, is alone wanting to make the priestly government of Ireland the son and heir of that which once prevailed in Italy. The scenes of intolerance and persecution that take place from time to time, and indeed the plain utterances of the priests, show that had they the power the third F would be brought very freely and vigorously into play. The Roman Catholic Church is always true to its motto, “*Semper eadem, ubique, in omnibus.*”

I now proceed to describe Pope and Priest and Church in Italy as they exist at the present time, and in doing so I am not surprised at anything I have to say about them, but I am surprised that, having such a past, they should still exist in Italy to be described at all. The wonder is that Italy did not get rid of them “bag and baggage” thirty odd years ago. It would have been well for her to-day if she had. The Papacy exists at this present moment as the enemy in her citadel, as the vulture gnawing at her vitals.

II

The Pope

The Negation of Christ

THERE are few, I daresay, who have looked into the history of the Popes, no matter what their religious faith may be, who will not agree with me when I say that it does not afford pleasant reading. One's intellect rebels against their preposterous claims and pretensions, and one's moral sense against their characters and lives. Amongst them there were some good men, some learned men, and some really able men; but taking them all in all, they were, beyond doubt, amongst the lowest class of men to be found on the page of history. To wade through their lives is to cross a pestiferous moral swamp of worldliness, simony, nepotism, concubinage, personal animosities, sanguinary feuds, forged decretals, plunderings, poisonings, assassinations, massacres, death. The study of the lives of the Popes is a study of the "works of the flesh," not at all of the "fruits of the Spirit."

The Roman poet Belli, who died in 1863, in a

sonnet represents a Pope blessing, at Easter, the people from the balcony of St. Peter's. As he looked down upon a vast sea of human faces—for in those days every one had to attend the Church's ceremonies—he turned to a cardinal by his side and said, "How do all these people live?" "*Uno bugia l'altro, Santità*" (The one humbugs the other, your Holiness), was the answer. "*È vero?*" asked the Pope (Is that true?). "*Sì, Santità*" (Yes, your Holiness), responded the cardinal. "*E noi li bugiamo tutti,*" said the Pope, as he raised his hand to bless them. "*Nel nome del Padre, Figlio, e Spirito Santo*" (And we humbug them all. In the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost). I am afraid Belli's Pope only spoke the truth. Consciously or unconsciously, the Popes have humbugged people under the cloak of religion. Pope John XII. said: "*Non capisco com'è noi ci si possa guardare in faccia mentre celebriamo gli uffizi, senza scoppiar dal ridere*" (I cannot understand how any one can look us in the face when we are celebrating our offices without bursting into laughter). Fra Paolo Sarpi, in his *History of the Council of Trent*, after recounting certain amiable qualities in the character of Pope Leo X., says: "*E sarebbe stato un perfetto pontefice, se con queste avesse conquisito qualche cognizione delle cose della Religione, ed alquanto più d'inclinazione alla pietà, dell' una e dell' altra delle qualli non mostrava aver gran cura*" (And he would have been a perfect pontifex, if to these he

had added some knowledge of the things of religion, and a little more inclination to piety, for neither the one nor the other of these things ever gave him much concern). It was this Pope who said of the whole Papal system : “ *È un affare che frutta tanto bene, che sarebbe vera pazzia aprire gli occhi agli ignoranti* ” (It is an affair that is so fruitful, that it would be sheer folly to open the eyes of the ignorant). In one of his gay moods, in the midst of his jovial companions, he once exclaimed, “ Since God has given us the Papacy, let us enjoy it.”

His successor was Adrian VI., who, being a man of a different stamp, was not allowed to hold the pontificate long. He died within six months of his elevation, being but a little over sixty years of age. In the instructions he gave to a Cardinal Legate, whom he sent to represent him at the Council of Nuremberg, called to oppose the spread of Protestantism, occurs this remarkable passage : “ We know perfectly well that many abominable things have disgraced the Holy See, abuses in things spiritual ; and in fact everything has been perverted, and turned to evil. It ought not therefore to be to us a matter of surprise if the disease extends itself from the head to the members, and if from the sovereign Pontiff it should infect the inferior prelates.”

Let us now briefly examine the Pope's position.

Looking at it, in regard to all his pretensions, from an historical point of view, we all know—for it has been demonstrated over and over again—that

it is utterly untenable. His claim to be "universal Pope and universal King" rests, in the first place, on the decree of Phocas, Emperor of Constantinople from 602 to 610, who was a groom, and who attained to the imperial throne by the murder of the Emperor Mauritius, the Empress, their five sons, and many of the adherents of his throne, and who on his accession received the warm congratulations of Pope Gregory the Great. The Papal claim rests, in the second place, on the fictitious "donation of Constantine" and the "false decretals" published in the eighth century. Gibbon in his *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* calls the "donation of Constantine" and the "false decretals" "the two magic pillars of the spiritual and temporal monarchy of the Popes," and denounces them as the "most absurd of fables." He continues to say: "In the revival of letters and liberty this fictitious deed was transpierced by the pen of Laurentius Valla. His contemporaries of the fifteenth century were astonished at his sacrilegious boldness; yet, such is the silent and irresistible progress of reason, that before the end of the next age the fable was rejected by the contempt of historians and poets and the tacit or modest censure of the advocates of the Roman Church. The Popes themselves have indulged a smile at the credulity of the vulgar; but a false and obsolete title still sanctifies their reign, and, by the same fortune which has attended the decretals and the Sibylline oracles, the edifice has

subsisted after the foundations have been undermined."

The boasted "historic continuity" of the Papal Succession is as much a figment as the "false and obsolete title that still sanctifies his reign." I have before me Platina's *Lives of the Popes*, and several other *Lives*, but the lists of Popes in no two of them agree. What is common to all is breakage of the Papal succession by schism. This occurs in almost every century, and often several times in the same century. At such times there existed two, sometimes three, and occasionally even four Popes, as was the case when the Œcumenical Council of Constance was sitting (1414-1418), which deposed Benedict XIII., Gregory XII., Alexander V. who had been once a beggar, and John XXIII. who had been a pirate, and elected Martin V. During such contests each Pope claimed to be the only true one, and, not content with that, roundly abused his rivals, as antichrists and men of wicked lives, "snarling at each other," as Wycliffe says, "like dogs over a bone." Which of these quarrelling men were Popes and which were anti-Popes is a matter of opinion. The Popes of one historic list are the anti-Popes of another.

Not less a fiction than these things is that of the "independence" of the Popes, their claim to be under Divine guidance in what they say and do. Such a claim is nothing less than blasphemy. At different times they were the slaves of different

powers. In the early centuries the Eastern Emperor ruled them. In the tenth century Sergius III., Anastasius III., Leo VI., John XI., the son of Sergius III., John XII., and many others, were all raised to the pontificate by the influence of women whose names have become historic. The last Pope of that century, Sylvester II., was, according to Cardinal Benno, and William of Malmesbury, elected by the help of the devil, to whom, they say, he deliberately sold himself to obtain this office. In the eleventh century the feudal nobility, notably the Counts of Tusculum, were their masters, one of whose acts was to appoint a boy of twelve to be Pope (Benedict XII.), and who sold the office to Gregory VI. for the hand of a woman. In the fourteenth century the Popes were the slaves of France, until recently the bulwark of the Papacy; and ever since the days of Sixtus V. (1585-1590) they have been in the hands of the Jesuits, and never more completely so than at the present moment.

The position of Pope Leo XIII. in the Church to-day is simply that of a slave of the Jesuits. This is so universally recognised in Italy that when he says or does something outrageously disloyal the Italian press as a whole regards him in pity, rather than in anger, reserving its indignation for the Jesuits, saying, "*Povera creatura* (poor creature), he has to do what he is bid." The General of the Jesuits, the "black Pope," is the real and only Pope. The one who bears the title is but a figurehead.

It is the Jesuits' policy he pursues, their voice that speaks through him, their hand that guides him.

When illustrating this fact to me, Count Campello, who was a great friend of the late Pope Pio Nono, drew a circle, and said, "Within that circle he is free; if he crosses it, he is a dead man." That is to say, in minor affairs he has a certain amount of freedom, but the moment he dares to act for himself in important matters, against the will of the Jesuits, he runs the risk of being got rid of, and the means the Jesuits threaten to use for this purpose is that one so indelibly associated with their name and history, poison. There is no exaggeration in the late Emile Zola's reference to this in his *Rome*, when he represents Pierre saying, "What! Poison? Again? The Pope poisoned!" To which Prado answers, "Why, yes, poison, . . . poison with all its legends, poison which kills like lightning and leaves no trace, the famous recipe bequeathed from age to age, through the emperors and the popes." Whilst Pope Pio Nono, goaded on, as Adolphus Trollope shows in his *Life of that Pontiff*, by an inordinate vanity and love of applause, was for two and a half years a liberal Pope, the cry that, times without number, met his ears, in the streets of Rome, was, "Don't take their chocolate, Holy Father, don't take their chocolate." The reference was, of course, to the Jesuits, who, they knew, would not allow the Pope for very long to thwart their will. And one time-

honoured medium for the giving of the poison is of course the sacramental wine. The "poisoned chalice" is a byword in Italy.

When speaking of this once at a public meeting in London, a lady at the close stayed behind, and said to me, "I saw in St. Peter's what people said was an attempt to poison Pio Nono. After drinking the wine at the celebration of the mass, he changed colour, and seemed to stagger, when he was quickly borne out of the church." It is possible that he might have been seized with one of the fits he was subject to in his youth, but no one so explained it. It was after this event, too, that he wheeled round in his policy, and from being a liberal Pope—which is, however, a contradiction in terms—became a perfect Bomba, working greedily with both hands the will of Father Beck, the Jesuit, who, concealed, as Adolphus Trollope says, "in the ample folds of the great pontifical mantle," pulled "the wires that regulated the movements of the majestic puppet." I have often been told by Italians, who were behind the scenes, that the present Pope, Leo XIII., never eats anything, nor drinks a drop of liquid, which is not first tasted in his presence. This, then, is the ecclesiastical position of the so-called Vicar of Jesus Christ—the slave of a class of men whose very name is a synonym for moral obliquity and depravity.

Very different is the Pope's position in the sight of Italian law. In view of what our "Object Lesson"

has just taught us regarding the Roman Pontiffs and their rule in Italy—how they and their governments made “the garden of the world, the home of all art yields and nature can decree,” “a land of the dead,” “a garden of Eden without the tree of knowledge and without the tree of life”; how they rendered life utterly intolerable—then the conduct of the Italian Government towards their fallen enemy is simply amazing in its generosity and magnanimity. One’s natural impulse would have been to carry out Voltaire’s counsel and “*écrasez l’infâme*” (crush out the infamous one), instead of which the Italian Government accorded him such a legal position and such privileges, as seemed to show that they were actuated by the very spirit of the Gospel as it is set forth in the words: “Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you.” Their action is embodied in the Articles which are called the “Papal Guarantees,” the substance of which is the following :—

ART. I.—The person of the High Pontiff is sacred and inviolable.

ART. II.—Attempts against the person of the High Pontiff, and any instigation to such attempts, are punishable as they would be if directed against the person of the King.

ART. III.—The Italian Government renders to the High Pontiff, in the territory of the

Kingdom, sovereign honours, and accords him the power to maintain a certain number of guards for his person and palaces.

ART. IV.—There is set aside in favour of the Holy See the endowment of an annual income of 3,225,000 Italian lire (£129,000), which is the sum found inscribed in the Roman balance sheet, under the title : Sacred Apostolic Palaces, Sacred College, Ecclesiastical Congregations, Secretary of State, and Foreign Diplomatic Office.

ART. V.—The High Pontiff, besides the above-mentioned endowment, will continue to enjoy the use of the Apostolic Palaces of the Vatican and the Lateran, with all the buildings, gardens, and grounds annexed, besides the Villa Castel Gandolfo and its grounds, free from taxes.

ART. VI.—During the vacancy of the Pontifical seat no authority shall be allowed to interfere with the free action of the Cardinals.

ART. VII.—No public official or agent of police, in the exercise of his duties, can enter the residences of the High Pontiff.

ART. VIII.—It is forbidden to confiscate papers in the Offices and Pontifical Congregations invested solely with spiritual attributes.

ART. IX.—The High Pontiff is completely free to fulfil all the functions of his spiritual ministry.

ART. X.—Ecclesiastics who, by reason of their office, take part in publishing in Rome the acts of the Spiritual Minister of the Holy See are not on that account to be interfered with by the public authorities.

ART. XI.—The ambassadors or agents accredited by foreign Governments to His Holiness enjoy in the Kingdom the prerogatives and immunities accorded to Diplomatic Agents according to international right.

ART. XII.—The High Pontiff can correspond freely with the whole Catholic world, and for this end he can establish Post and Telegraph Offices to be worked by his own clerks; and letters and telegrams to and from the Pontiff shall be free from every tax.

ART. XIII.—In the city of Rome and in the six suburban sees, the Seminaries, Academies, Colleges, and other Catholic Institutions, founded for the education of Ecclesiastics, shall continue to depend only on the Holy See, without being interfered with by the Scholastic Authorities of the Kingdom.

The action of the Pope was worthy of himself. He spurned the whole of these generous and magnanimous concessions, and he chose to sulk in the Vatican as a prisoner. If the Vatican is a prison, the door is locked from the inside, and the Pope keeps the key. It is a very luxurious prison, with its eleven thousand rooms, its museums, its libraries and galleries

with their priceless treasures, and with its extensive gardens and grounds. It is a palace of delights.

The Pope is said to be very abstemious, but he has a patrimony of some eighty-five millions sterling, exclusive of the State's endowment of £129,000, which he does not touch, and which, by a law promoted by Signor Crispi, returns to the Italian exchequer every five years, the Pope forfeiting his right to it by a refusal extending over that period. Barring the endowment, the Pope, even whilst spurning the Government of Italy's concessions, takes advantage of them all. He has got his little army of some six hundred gaily dressed Swiss, he has got his private post and telegraph arrangements, he has got ambassadors accredited to him from foreign Catholic powers, and he has got the Vatican. Pio Nono used jokingly to say, "The Vatican with its eleven thousand rooms is too small for me, I stifle in them; I must go out to my gardens, and to my summer shooting-box, Villa Castel Gandolfo." When the present Pope has a similar feeling he is free to do the same.

The Pope does not come out of the Vatican for two reasons. First, because if he did, he would stultify his legal position as entitled to sovereign honours, for who in the realm of King Victor Emmanuel III. would accord those to him? Secondly, because the falsehood of his being a prisoner, like many another in the Papal Church, is a profitable one, gaining for him much foreign sympathy, and,

what is more important, much foreign money. I personally know of servant-girls cutting off their hair, that its price might bring him some comforts, and priests have often sold straw which they said had been taken from the dungeon floor on which he slept.

The legal status, then, of the Pope in Italy, secured to him by the "Papal Guarantees," is one of great dignity, liberty, and comfort; and nothing is more true than the following conclusion, drawn by a writer in the *Nazione*, at the close of 1901, after a review of the past history of the Papal Church: "I dare say in conclusion, with fullest confidence, that the Papacy has never enjoyed a period so tranquil, so secure in independence, and in absolute liberty, as that which it has passed through from the 20th of September 1870 till to-day. He who denies it, audaciously contradicts history."

Let me now say a few words as to the position Leo XIII. claims, aspires to, and labours to attain. He claims to be a lawful Italian sovereign, and he and the Curia intrigue and work for that position to the damage of the Kingdom of Italy. He maintains in active force the sentence of excommunication fulminated by Pope Pio Nono against the House of Savoy, against the Senate, against the Chamber of Deputies, and against all who have a share in the administration of the law and the government of the country; and the official organs of the Church attribute to that ecclesiastical ban all national

misfortunes and calamities, such as inundations, earthquakes, railway accidents, epidemics, and devastations caused by storms and tempests, the sufferings caused by which the Pope has never been known either to pity or relieve. He denies to King Victor Emmanuel the title of King of Italy, and refers to him only as the King of Sardinia, or the Wolf of Savoy.

One of the documents produced in court at Milan in connection with the trial arising out of the so-called "Bread Riots" of 1898 was a sort of postcard, which bore on one side a portrait of the Pope dressed as a sovereign, with his triple crown, and on the other words to this effect: "The Pope is King of kings and Lord of lords. He is responsible to none save Jesus Christ, whose vicar he is. The Pope requires temporal sovereignty in order to fulfil his mission. This was sacrilegiously taken from him. Although temporal sovereignty is not an article of faith, yet it is so closely allied to an article of faith, that those who do not believe in it, and do not work to bring it about, imperil their everlasting salvation." Of this seditious instrument some seventy thousand copies were put into circulation by the priests, and were one of the causes of the riots and bloodshed.

When King Humbert, *il Re benefico* (the beneficent King), as he is called, was assassinated at Monza on July 29, 1900, the behaviour of the Pope was such as to outrage the moral sense not of Italy only, but

of every civilised country. After many maimed funeral services had been held in memory of the murdered King, the Pope wrote :—

“ Not a few in Italy, and many more in foreign lands, beholding the funeral honours rendered to the memory of the dead King Humbert, have complained that in this the Pope has receded from the most holy law of the Church. It is necessary, then, to say that the Pope only *tolerated* these services for the late King, in part as a protest against a horrible crime, but much more because of circumstances personal to the deceased, who in the last years of his life gave not doubtful signs of religious sentiment, even to the extent of desiring, it is said, to reconcile himself to God, by means of the sacraments, during this holy year. Assuming this to be the case, it may be presumed that in the last moments of his life he may have implored the infinite mercy of God, and if time had only been given him, he would not have hesitated to reconcile himself with Him.”

The plain English of the Pope's statement is that King Humbert contemplated abdicating his throne and betraying his country in order to reconcile himself to the Church, and through it to God ; but not having done it, he died unreconciled to God, but the Pope has rewarded his intention by *tolerating* his funeral services. The Pope was challenged to produce proof of his calumny, but no proof has ever been given, and the following are specimens of the

judgment of the country on his action, expressed through the daily press. The *Tribuna* said :—

“This strange, inconceivable manifestation of Vaticanism must rouse a sense of disgust in every pious mind and in every honest conscience. The policy of irritation pursued by the Vatican does not disdain to carry its offensive conduct against the moral character, the rectitude and nobility of soul of him who declared Rome the ‘*capitale intangibile*,’ even over his unclosed grave. In this instance it has outraged all sentiments of religion and piety.”

In an article in the *Corriere di Napoli*, its editor, Signor Raffaele de Cesare, a member of the Chamber of Deputies, one who, belonging to the moderate party, had for years worked to bring about some kind of reconciliation between Pope and King, between Church and State, thus wrote :—

“In his old age Leo XIII. has manifested strongly two qualities that as a boy were noticed in him, and that perhaps contributed to carry him to his present exalted place : first, *a total disregard of every one*, and secondly, *a fulness of personal scornful conceit*. He hates with his whole soul the new order of things. Nor is his hatred founded on principle. It is a hatred native to him, which is intense and inextinguishable. He detests everything that concurs to maintain the present state of things in Italy, and his hatred is concentrated on the Royal House, which seems to him to obscure the glory of the Papacy and of himself, and which has

its seat in Rome, where it contests with him the primacy. His hatred degenerates into personalities, pettinesses, jealousies, and envies. In Rome no one should exist but himself, he being its temporal and absolute Sovereign. He has the nature of the Popes of the Middle Ages, but without their faith. Cardinal Ferrieri, who was the Pope's companion at school and his fellow-student, remarked, when Pecci was elected Pope, that as a boy his school-companions said he had but two distinguishing characteristics, *avariciousness and pride.*"

The above portrait of the Pope is one true to life, and it is these very characteristics, avariciousness and pride, that explain to a large extent the persistency with which he puts forward his claim to be regarded as the Sovereign of Italy, and the pertinacity with which he works for it, even down to the present moment, when, to use his own words, he is "about to take his flight from the earth."

Lastly, let us look at the position the Pope holds in the feelings and affections of the Italian people. Ecclesiastics in Italy are never tired of dinning into the ears of English travellers that this is one of respect and affection, whilst they are equally alert in saying that these are lacking towards King Victor Emmanuel; and Roman Catholic writers in Italy and out of it, inspired by the Vatican, diligently circulate the same ideas. I need not say that these notions are on a par with the fable of the Pope's imprisonment in a Roman dungeon!

They are the very reverse of the truth. This is apparent from the extracts I have just given from the press of the country regarding King and Pope.

It is apparent from the very existence of Italy as a free and united kingdom under a constitutional monarchy. The kingdom was created in spite of everything the Pope could do to prevent it, and it exists and prospers in spite of everything he does to destroy it. King Victor Emmanuel is beloved, the Pope is despised. He is regarded as the arch-enemy of Italy, as one who, if he had the power, would upset the throne, take from the Italians all their constitutional rights and liberties, and reinstate that reign of espionage and terror, of ignorance and injustice, of imprisonment and massacre, of which I have spoken in the preceding chapter as characterising the temporal rule of his predecessors. I am not therefore surprised when I hear him inveighed against in the very strongest terms. At a meeting of the Monarchical Society of Venice, held around the monument of Fra Paolo Sarpi, the "Greatest of the Venetians," whom Pope Paul v., through his bravoës, stabbed in 1607, the President of the Society, after referring to that attempted assassination, and to the fact that the Republic so denounced the Pope and his infamous deed in every land, and so roused public opinion against him, that he was forced to bring his own hired and protected and pensioned desperadoes to justice, said, "And how should we act, what should we do, when there sits in the Vatican

in Rome not the Assassin of a citizen however eminent, but the Assassin of the Nation?" On the occasion of the Pope's Jubilee, March 1903, certain clerical members of the Town Council of Rome approached the Mayor, Prince Colonna, stating that they desired to bring forward a motion in the Council that a congratulatory address be sent to the Pope, not as the Pope, but as the father of the people, and as an illustrious citizen. Prince Colonna replied that such a motion he would not for a moment entertain, adding in words destined to become historic: "*Il Papa non riconosce il Re, ed io non riconosco il Papa*" (The Pope does not recognise the King, and I do not recognise the Pope). I may here say that this ignoring of the Pope and his Jubilee by Prince Colonna was the policy of the King, of the Government, and indeed of all Italy. The Papal celebration was the work of hired mercenaries, and of strangers.

From what I have said it must be apparent that the presence, position, and pretensions of the Pope in Rome are a tremendous embarrassment to the Italian Government, and this embarrassment is vastly aggravated by the fact that Roman Catholics in other lands own the Pope as their Sovereign. A conspicuous example of this evil was afforded in 1891, when the Duke of Norfolk, at the head of a group of English pilgrims, went to Rome and actually advocated the restoration of the Pope's temporal power. In the eyes of Italian law his

words were treasonable, and had an Italian subject used them he would instantly have been arrested. As the newspapers of the country said, his action was analagous to that of an Italian who should go to London and publicly advocate the separation of Ireland from Great Britain, and as the Duke of Norfolk is an ex-Minister of the Crown his action was fitted to create political trouble.

Then, again, travellers who are Protestants are too apt to do a wrong to Italy by their anxiety to see the Pope and to be present at the ceremonies in St. Peter's. Indeed, as every one familiar with the tactics of the Vatican knows, little anxiety is necessary on their part to have their curiosity gratified in these matters. The anxiety is all the other way, the Vatican taking means to be informed of the arrival in Rome of Protestant travellers of wealth and social position, that it may flatter them with its attentions, and procure for them an audience of the Pope. But such travellers cannot too frequently bear in mind that every recognition of the Pope is an insult to King Victor Emmanuel, and an act of ingratitude to the country that is giving them hospitality. They enjoy perfect liberty in Italy by the goodwill of the King and Government, and in spite of the Pope, who, had he the power, as he told the Duke of Norfolk, who lamented his impotence, would deprive them of it. The Pope is *semper idem*. The words of Pio Nono fit also the lips of Leo XIII., and of all Popes: "He who talks of

reforming me means to get rid of me, or, whether he means it or not, that is what his efforts tend to."

The solution of the difficulty so far as Italy is concerned would be to get the Pope outside its borders. It could have effected this in 1870, and it had another opportunity of doing so when Pio Nono died, in 1878. At that time, as Mr. Stillman tells us, the College of Cardinals had resolved to leave Italy, in order, so it said, to have freedom to elect his successor. Crispi let it be known that it was at perfect liberty to do so, but that the moment it left the Vatican the Government would take possession of it, and the Pope would be for ever excluded. The College resolved to stay. It would be a good fortune for Italy if, when a successor is required for Leo XIII., the College would once more resolve to go abroad for his election! And it would be a decided gain for the world if no new election should ever take place. The Italians, at least, to use the words of the *Riforma*, "*non si vestirebbero in lutto*"—would not put on mourning.

The squib that Pasquino drew up in the form of a comparison, or rather a contrast, between Christ and the Pope, is as true to fact to-day as when he affixed it to his column at the corner of the Orsini Palace in Rome at the beginning of the sixteenth century. It is as follows:—

Cristo disse: Il mio regno non
è di questo mendo.

Christ said: My kingdom is
not of this world.

Il Papa conquista le città con
la forza.

The Pope conquers cities by
force.

Cristo aveva una corona di spine.	Christ had a crown of thorns.
Il Papa porta triplo diadema.	The Pope wears a triple diadem.
Cristo lavò i piedi ai suoi discepoli.	Christ washed the feet of His disciples.
Il Papa se li fa baciare dai re.	The Pope has his kissed by kings.
Cristo pagava i tributi.	Christ paid tribute.
Il Papa li riscuote.	The Pope takes it.
Cristo nutriva le pecorelle.	Christ fed the sheep.
Il Papa le tosa a suo profitto.	The Pope shears them for his own profit.
Cristo era povero.	Christ was poor.
Il Papa intende impadronirsi del mondo.	The Pope wishes to be master of the world.
Cristo portò sulle spalle la croce.	Christ carried on His shoulders the cross.
Il Papa si fa portare a spalla dai servitori in livrea dorata.	The Pope is carried on the shoulders of his servants in liveries of gold.
Cristo dispreggiò le ricchezze.	Christ despised riches.
Il Papa non ha altra passione che quella dell'oro.	The Pope has no other passion than for gold.
Cristo espulse i mercanti dal tempio.	Christ drove out the merchants from the temple.
Il Papa ce li accoglie.	The Pope welcomes them.
Cristo predicò la pace.	Christ preached peace.
Il Papa è la fiaccola della guerra.	The Pope is the torch of war.
Cristo era la mansuetudine.	Christ was meekness.
Il Papa è l'orgoglio in persona.	The Pope is pride personified.
Cristo promulgò le leggi che il Papa pose sotto i piedi.	Christ promulgated the laws that the Pope tramples underfoot.

III

The Priest

First Victim, then Victimiser

PEOPLE in Great Britain generally suppose, and naturally suppose, that Italian priests have much in common with their own Protestant clergymen. They think, therefore, that the priests are drawn from a respectable class in society, that they are well educated, that they are men of more or less blameless life, that they are loyal citizens, and that they are the moral and spiritual teachers of the people, whose confidence and respect they possess, and over whom they exercise an influence more or less for good.

Nothing, however, could be farther from the truth. Indeed, the very opposite is the case. The rank and file of the Italian priesthood is recruited from the lowest of the people. Its members are ignorant, uncultured men, they are of doubtful reputation, they are the slaves of the Vatican, they are the enemies of their King and country, they are not received into society, and they are, as a class, despised, and what influence

they possess is very limited in its range, and generally exercised on the wrong side. Of course what I have said does not hold of all Italian priests, but it is true of a large majority; indeed, it distinguishes them as a class. Let me now illustrate briefly these several points.

In the first place, PRIESTS ARE DRAWN, with but few exceptions, FROM THE LOWEST OF THE PEOPLE. Nothing offends a boy more than to ask him if he is going to be a priest. If such a question be put to a group of school lads, as I have sometimes done, there is a general shrug of the shoulders, and in contemptuous tones they answer, "Not one of us." No father who respects himself will give his son to the priesthood. A widower with a large number of children once asked me to put one of his boys into a Protestant institution. I said, "Why, there is the Papal seminary; put him there, and make a priest of him. The Church will be glad enough to get him." Hanging his head a little, he said, "Yes, I know that, but I want my boy to follow a respectable calling." When I last went through a Papal seminary, I asked the professor who conducted me how many of the sixty or seventy boys in the place were studying for the priesthood. His answer was "Fifteen," and he added of his own accord, "and they are fifteen paupers. They are all on the shoulders of our poor archbishop." That is to say, they were poor country lads, secured by village priests, who had

succeeded in persuading their parents or guardians that it would be a fine thing to put them into the priesthood. Accordingly they were received into the seminary to be fed and clothed and housed and trained at the expense of the Church. Some few years ago I read in a Lombardic newspaper that, in the Neapolitan district, the Church was actually purchasing the children of drunkards and criminals at so much a head to make them priests.

Of course boys drawn even from these lowest grades might be trained and educated, and come to possess characters and lead lives worthy of respect and esteem. But this is seldom the case.

STUDENTS FOR THE PRIESTHOOD ARE NOT EDUCATED AS WE UNDERSTAND EDUCATION. The Church is afraid of modern research in every department of learning—theology, philosophy, science, history. Mr. Gladstone, writing on *Italy and her Church* in the *Church Quarterly Review* for October 1875, says: “The Roman Curia aims at nothing so sedulously, prizes nothing so highly, as the total removal of the clergy from the general, open atmosphere of human life and thought.” The text-books of the Church are therefore all doctored to suit its own mediæval notions. A Government school-inspector who examined some Papal seminary boys, told me that not one of them was fit to pass an ordinary examination in any National school. I am occasionally brought into contact with young priests who wish to quit their Church for an Evangelical one,

and I find them always uneducated. A country parish priest lately said to me that even the peasants laugh at the ignorance and crude ideas of the priests.

But the instruction given in the Papal seminaries is not only defective and erroneous, it is often positively immoral in its tendency; for, under the pretence, or with the object, of guarding them against evil and making them holy, things are spoken of which suggest what is wicked to the young mind. For example, an Italian gentleman, who is not a Protestant, but rather an Ultramontane, told me that when he was a boy in the Papal seminary his priest-teacher when instructing the class as to the life and character of St. Louis Gonzaga, who is the guardian saint of boys and students in Roman Catholic seminaries, said, that "*San Luigi era tanto casto che non guardava in faccia la sua madre*" (St. Louis was so pure that he did not look his mother in the face). My friend then added: "I was completely puzzled to know what my teacher meant, for I was accustomed as soon as I got home from school to rush to my mother, to climb upon her knee, and to gaze into her face. It was not till after long years that I came to understand his words." It is needless to remind the reader that St. Louis Gonzaga was a Jesuit; for, as an Italian newspaper says, "only a typical Jesuit could invent such an outrage on the most sacred laws of nature, and in fact this model saint

has logically taken his place alongside St. Alfonso Liguori. He was canonised in 1826." The incident I have related shows the profound corruption of the celibate priestly mind, and how it is propagated from elder to younger, from teacher to pupil.

The boys in the Papal seminaries are thus not fed with good wholesome fruit from the "Tree of Life, that grows in the midst of the Paradise of God," but with "Apples of Sodom" from the "Tree of the Knowledge of . . . Evil." The Apostle Paul says in his Epistle to the Philippians: "Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report, if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things." The Papal teachers, as a rule, reverse that injunction, and direct the minds of their pupils to things possessing moral qualities of an opposite character, and though these things are held up as dangers to be avoided, the youths are damaged. They touch pitch and they are defiled.

The fact of the matter is, that the Papal Church does not wish its priests to be educated, nor is it particularly anxious that they should be good. All that it really wants is, that they should be able to perform their offices, and, as more than one priest has assured me, many cannot even do that properly; for, not understanding, or having forgotten, the Latin of their prayer-books, they recite at the altar

what is simply gibberish. The learned Jesuit, Padre Curci, again and again in his books deploras this as a scandalous blot on the Church. In his *Vaticano Regio* he says: "Young priests leave the seminaries not only without the love and habit of study, but even without the very idea of it." Again, in his *La Nuova Italia ed i Vecchi Zelanti*, he says: "The decline in the learning of the clergy amongst us, as shown by the printed and spoken word, is only too plainly to be seen; and it is humiliating and painful in a society in which addresses and pamphlets, written by the laity to the damage of the Church, are so common. This inferiority in learning has its origin in the meagreness of the studies in which the young clergy are trained in their seminaries." And again he tells us that the bishops and prelates "are very glad that things should be as they are, in order that they may find the clergy more manageable, and not bristling with knowledge."

Not only are the priests uneducated, but THEY ARE ALSO TOO OFTEN, for happily there are exceptions, MEN OF QUESTIONABLE CHARACTER AND LIFE. This is not to be wondered at when one considers that, besides their bad education, most of them were entrapped into the priesthood. With us a man enters the Church of his own free choice, after he has reached years of discretion. Knowing well what he is about, he deliberately, and generally actuated by the highest and holiest motives, enters the ministry.

But how different is the case of an Italian priest ! He is taken for the priesthood as a child, before he knows, so to say, his right hand from his left. He takes certain vows and obligations without in the least knowing what they mean, and he is subjected to a peculiar discipline in utter ignorance of what lies before him. It is a heartlessly cruel thing. A young life blighted ! A company of innocent young boys turned into seminarists, and led about clad in priest's petticoats, under the care of their priest-teachers, always seems to me to be one of the saddest sights one can look upon. They are simply victims, being led blindfolded into a quagmire, or over a precipice—sheep led to the slaughter ; and then as they grow up, and come to realise the unnaturalness of the life to which they are committed, they realise also that it is one beset with peculiar temptations. The confessional becomes a snare to them. First victimised themselves, they in turn, by its instrumentality, become victimisers of others.

At present there is no law of divorce in Italy, and no law authorising a right of search into paternity. Legislation, however, on both these subjects forms part of the programme of the Zanardelli Ministry, and is being debated in the Chamber and in the country. The one enemy, however, of the proposed laws is the Church. The Pope instructed the priests to denounce them from the altar, and so well did they begin to do

so, inducing all the old people and the children who frequent their services to sign petitions in the churches against them, that the Government took action, and ordered the local authorities to enforce the law which forbids buildings intended for religious purposes to be used for such as are purely political. As the proposed legislation stands on the statute-books of most civilised nations, and as it is recognised by all as necessary in the interest of morality, the press of Italy has raised the question: Does not the opposition of the Church show that its interest lies the other way? Because of the celibacy of the clergy it believes it does, which celibacy is denounced as the veriest sham, and as the cause of a widespread and a deeply-rooted immorality. Skits and lampoons that do not bear reproduction, aimed against the priest as a "celibate," are being continually produced.

Priests, too, I find, sooner or later realise the hollowness of all their priestly claims, and how the whole Papal system is a huge deception. As one of them said to me, "We young priests all come sooner or later to a fork in the road when we find we are occupying an utterly false position, and then we must either break with the Church, or, smothering our consciences, go on mechanically performing our offices, too often to become simply infidels or atheists." He then added: "Ninety per cent of the priests whom I know, have smothered their consciences, and are unbelievers." Is it

wonderful, then, that men so brought up and so circumstanced should not be men of high moral principle, especially when, as I have said, the Church does not insist that they should be such?

Truth-speaking is a thing that is rarely associated in the public mind with a priest. Of the priests in Southern Italy it is frequently said that from their lips "*non è mai uscita una verità*" (there never came forth one truth). A judge in that part of Italy once told me that the greatest obstacle he encountered in administering justice was caused by the priests, who were essentially untruthful themselves, and who actually instructed the people to bear false testimony. Want of truth-speaking is not peculiar to the Italian priest; it more or less, I believe, characterises Roman Catholic priests the world over; nor is it found only amongst those in humble positions, it is also found amongst those of all ecclesiastical grades, up to the highest. One is amazed from time to time at the revelation of deliberate falsehoods uttered, when the interest of their Church is at stake, by Papal ecclesiastics who stand high in rank and high in public esteem in Protestant lands. Mr. Froude has said that the Reformation was "brought about by people refusing longer to believe a lie"; if the creed, therefore, of the Roman Catholic Church partakes essentially of that nature, one need not wonder if people become like their creed.

Professor Mariano, of the University of Naples,

who is not a Protestant, but, like the majority of his countrymen, strongly anti-Papal, in an address which I heard him deliver in Florence in 1891, said: "What of the clergy? Here indeed Romanism has worked the greatest destruction. Under the whip of the Papal system our clergy lie prostrate in a senile and servile lethargy, which deadens mind and soul. It is enough to enter a Roman Catholic church, to perceive that the faith and the religiousness of the priests themselves have become deadened and mummified in formalism and outward rites. Their ignorance, and the laziness in which they rejoice, is easier to deplore than to measure. With a few remarkable exceptions, their studies are such a mean, sterile, and decrepit thing, that we can quite understand the saying of a Bavarian schoolmaster: 'A drop of holy water is better than all philosophy.' The despotic power of the hierarchy, centred in the Pope, has caused the priesthood to become morally apathetic, and to turn their eyes from heavenly to earthly things. Enforced celibacy is the reason why immorality and hypocrisy have become the dominant traits of their lives."

All, of course, do not fall. Guiseppe Maria Campanella, the ex-monk, and patriot chaplain to the Neapolitan forces, and for long an exile in London, tells us in his *Autobiography*: "The enforced negation of myself and the immense corruption of my associates did not conquer me." There may be some who can use similar language, but without

doubt the majority are conquered, and all the more readily that the Church rarely takes action in such a case. In this respect things seem to have little changed since the time when the clergy received dispensations to live in breach of their vows. One day when I was walking near Arrone, in Umbria, with an Italian evangelist, a priest passed us on a black horse, when a boy sitting on a low wall cried out, "*Un prete del diavolo!*" (A priest of the devil). I asked what the boy meant. The priest, I was told, was such a source of corruption in a certain village that the men rose against him. The Church then had to take action, and it is only on such occasions that it does. No matter how notoriously wicked the priest is, unless the people complain, he is let alone. Its action in this case was simply to transfer him to another parish, thus really giving him a fresh field for the continuance of his evil ways. As Count Campello, already referred to, has often told me, the only crime a priest can commit in the eyes of his Church is to think for himself. Everything else that he may be guilty of in the way of wrong-doing counts for little or nothing, and is readily forgiven him, should it chance to be considered worthy of blame, which many moral delinquencies are not.

"Look at the faces of these men," to quote again from Campanella's *Autobiography*, "and you will generally perceive the impress of the dissolute man, resulting from the effeminacy of life in the cloister, where three extreme evils, ignorance, idleness, and

enforced celibacy, bring their never-failing and most mournful consequences." Mr. Ruskin thought of a section of the priesthood in the same way; for when he wished to convey an idea of the baseness of a special piece of portraiture, he wrote it had "a huge, gross, bony, clown's face, with the peculiar sodden and sensual cunning in it, which is seen so often in the countenances of the worst Romanist priests, a face part of iron and part of clay, with the immobility of the one and the foulness of the other; the face of a man incapable either of joy or sorrow, unless such as may be caused by the indulgence of passion or the mortification of pride." From what has been said in public by statesmen, and from what I have been told by those who are in a position to know, I am led to believe that the worst class of priests are those in high positions in the Vatican—the *Alto Clero*. Before the overthrow of the Pope's temporal power in 1870 their immorality was open and undisguised. I have already quoted the testimony of the Hon. Guiseppe Zanardelli as to the shameless behaviour of cardinals in the streets of Rome, and his belief that the cessation of that scandal is not due to any clerical betterment, but to the force of law and public opinion. Many writers and speakers have borne similar testimony. Iniquity, therefore, in high places has not ceased, it has only been driven underground.

PRIESTS being thus low-born, uneducated, and of doubtful life, ARE NOT, I need hardly say, THE MORAL

AND SPIRITUAL TEACHERS OF THE NATION. The Apostle Paul says, "Those things which ye have both learned and received and heard and seen in me, do," but the people learn, receive, hear, and see nothing worthy of imitation in these men. The ordinary priest does not preach, he really cannot do so. At certain times of the year, during Lent and Advent, for instance, there is a great deal of preaching, but it is done by men specially qualified and set apart for the purpose—"eloquent men," though not "mighty in the Scriptures"; for, as Padre Curci has said, "if theological study in general has waned and degenerated amongst our clergy, biblical study has been entirely abandoned."

Then priests do not come into contact with the life of the people. In the article by Mr. Gladstone on *Italy and her Church* in the *Church Quarterly Review*, from which I have already quoted, he says that the clerical student is practically excluded "from the possibility of lay contact, and of knowledge of the social body on and in which he is to act." Priests do not visit their parishioners as Protestant clergymen do. They are not fit to do so, neither socially nor educationally. I know of an old lady who owns many broad acres, and the parish priest is her confessor. She has told me herself that when he comes to "confess" her, and to give her absolution, he is always embarrassed. The interview generally ends by the old lady saying, "Why, you do not know anything! Give me absolution, and be off to the

kitchen, where the servants will give you wine and food." The priest instantly complies, and goes off to where he feels at ease. Not long ago I heard a young lady say, "How can we respect priests? We know far more than they do."

But the greatest obstacle of all to receiving a priest into the family is the moral one. Mr. Gladstone, quoting the objections of a parish to receive a priest, says: "To men so enslaved they (the parishioners) declare that they cannot give their confidence or open their minds, nor can they entrust to such men the spiritual care of their wives, actual or betrothed."

This social ostracism of the priest struck me very much when we were staying with some friends at a provincial town near Milan. In the course of a week or two we had met all the people of any status in the place, but never a priest, though my host used occasionally to go to church. At last I remarked on the fact to our hostess, who replied, "Oh, nobody receives a priest! Any one doing so would fall in public estimation. It would be considered not only unpatriotic, but immoral." Ladies may receive as many officers as they please, and little would be said or thought about it, but that they should receive a priest would create a scandal. The army stands in this respect far above the Church. Of course priests are generally called in at special events in life, such as at baptism, marriage, and death; but, as marriage is a civil rite, even then his "benediction" is often

dispensed with, and dying people frequently refuse to see a priest, and give orders that their funerals are to be civil ones. And when a priest does conduct a funeral, as I have often seen him do, he always seems to me to be treated exactly like any tradesman. Like the undertaker, for example, he goes through his duties and is paid his fee, and, the transaction ended, there is no occasion for further intercourse.

In a future chapter I shall deal with the hostile attitude the Church assumes towards the State, but the use of the word "unpatriotic" in the quotation last made leads me here to say that priests, as a class, are thoroughly disloyal to their King and country, and this disloyalty is another reason, if another is wanted, to explain why they are banned by society. Loyal subjects cannot receive into their homes their country's enemies. In a skit which I have just seen, a Rome newspaper represents itself as a scavenger, armed with a stout broom, sweeping before it the priests of Italy, with the words, "*Su, via, Signori Preti, al letamaio*" (Off with you, ye priests, to the dunghill).

Such being the character and position of the Italian priest, no one will be surprised at what I say in conclusion, that no profession is held in less esteem than that of the priesthood, and that no men are so despised and even hated as its members. It is a distinctly discreditable thing to be a priest, and it is a distinctly discreditable thing to be on terms

of friendship with one. A gentleman who has officially to do with them, has told me that he feels ashamed to be seen talking to them in the streets. A priest-professor from Padua, lecturing in Venice a few years ago before a gathering of Roman Catholic students and their friends, complained that if a man was seen to raise his hat respectfully to a priest in the street, he fell in public estimation. People, he said, would point the finger at him and call him a *birbone* (a scoundrel). When speaking recently to a group of mountain villagers on the subject of Church and religion, a woman said: "Well, I have told Don Giovanni (the parish priest) that, in my opinion, his profession is the saddest one on earth, for he is engaged in keeping people in ignorance and teaching them lies." I asked her what reply Don Giovanni made to that grave charge. She answered: "Oh, really nothing; he only said that I knew that we must not discuss such matters."

A Venetian newspaper lately dealt with what it called "that disgrace to the Roman Curia, the pariahs of priests, whom we call in our scoffing vocabulary *scagnozzi* (curs), who do not know how to keep body and soul together, and who are to be seen, ragged and haggard, wandering about the streets of Rome." Count di Campello has often spoken to me of these men, whom the proud *Alto Clero* in the Vatican call *fango* (mud), and who shuffle about the streets of Rome early in the morn-

ing, almost shoeless, to earn their breakfast by saying a mass. Cardinal Bellarmine's description of the priests of Reformation times is almost applicable to the priests of to-day: "They were a laughing-stock to every worthless knave; they were despised by the people, and laboured under deep and lasting infamy."

Fortunately the number of Italian priests is steadily decreasing. A priest said to me, with reference to a large town in Venetia in which he himself laboured: "Nine priests died here last year, whereas only three were ordained. A similar condition of things prevails throughout all Italy. I do not know what the Church will do to get priests." An English priest writing from Rome to some friends of my own, urging them to come into the bosom of Holy Mother Church, where alone is salvation, used the following argument: "Do come," he said; "for England is fast becoming Roman Catholic. In the college where I am studying, there are but six Italians and some sixty English." Travellers see plenty of young seminarists in Rome, and they are apt to imagine that the Church commands sympathy and support in Italy, until their attention is drawn to the fact that, in the words of the Venetian newspaper quoted above, they are "for the most part foreigners." I have often asked travellers, who said to me that Rome was swarming with young priests: "What language were they talking?" when I have got the answer: "Well, now that we think of it,

it was English, English for the most part with an Irish accent." Yes, the ranks of the priesthood are recruited from foreign lands, and largely from Ireland. The priests of the Church, like the soldiers that formed the Pope's armies, like his Swiss Guards now, are hired mercenaries. If the priesthood were not thus recruited, it would die out in Italy before the love of country and the onward march of education, of civilisation, and of Christianity.

What a happy change has come over Italy in this respect since the time, not so very long ago, when the Church forced every family to give a son to the priesthood—and its best son too; when the number of priests were thus legion; when their persons were held sacred; when "benefit of clergy" shielded them in every evil act; when they were omnipotent; when they could by a word, or even by a nod, as we have seen, cause respectable people to be arrested, imprisoned, tortured, and murdered without trial and without inquiry; when the sacredness of the family was violated by them; and when they were the *padroni* (the masters) in every house.

But Italy's happiness, in this respect, will not be complete until priests such as they now are disappear from the land, and men of the character and status of the British Protestant clergy take their place. Long ago Garibaldi, speaking of Caprera, his island home, said: "One of the special blessings of this place is the absence of priests, . . . and if this

Italy does not occupy the place it ought, it is on account of that black race of priests, a worse plague than the cholera morbus." Yet Garibaldi found some good priests. He loved his friend Ugo Bassi, whom he called his "white dove," although he could not bear him in his priest's dress.

"It likes me ill
To see a white dove in a raven's nest,
 Thou shalt leave the black
Garb of the priesthood which I most abhor,
And all my soldiers hate the sight of it."

There is no reason why Italy should not have a race of "white doves" instead of "black ravens." But it will not be in connection with the Papal Church. A bad creed makes bad people. One regrets to say it, but there is little room for goodness inside its pale, especially in the ranks of its clergy.

A friend of my own, who was anxious to be a priest, was rejected because "*egli porta troppo l'evangelo*" (he carries too much of the Gospel); another, a priest, had to resign because, in preaching on "Christ the Light of the World," he was accused of teaching "justification by faith," which unconsciously he had done. And from Savonarola and Fra Paolo Sarpi, down the centuries, I have never read or heard of a Christian priest who was not persecuted by his Church. Italy would welcome a reformed clergy, but they will have to appear in connection with a reformed Church. Let

us trust that in God's good providence these unspeakable blessings may soon be conferred upon this young, noble nation, when the present state of things will be entirely reversed, and the Apostle Paul's word hold good, that "If a man desire the office of a bishop (or priest), he desireth a good work"; when he will be "blameless, the husband of one wife, vigilant, sober, of good behaviour, given to hospitality, apt to teach," having "a good report of them that are without, holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience," feeding "the Church of God, which He hath purchased with His own blood."

IV

The Church

"The Antithesis of Christianity"

THE definition "the Antithesis of Christianity" is rather a startling one to be applied to a Church that not only claims to be a Christian Church, but to be the only genuine one in existence. The definition, however, is not mine, nor does it emanate from a Protestant. It is that of Dr. Raffaele Mariano, Professor of Philosophy in the University of Naples, already quoted, who, as he tells us, was "born in the Roman Catholic Church," and was "a fervent Catholic from infancy." It is the conclusion which he draws from premises which I here give, so that any one can easily decide for himself whether his definition is a logical one or not.

The practice of the Roman Catholic Church taught him to believe, he says, that his salvation was secured by his being inside its pale, and by having its services said for him by its accredited agents, independent, practically, of character and life. But he had been reading the New Testament,

and found nothing of the kind, but that, on the contrary, his salvation depended "on a mystical change of heart, wrought in him through faith in Christ, by the influence of the Holy Spirit." "Therefore," he argues, "Roman Catholicism is not only not Christianity, but it is the *very antithesis of Christianity.*"

If his premises are correct, his conclusion seems to me a right one, for the very essence of Christianity is *salvation from sin*—"Thou shalt call His name Jesus," said the angel to Joseph, "for He shall save His people from their sins." Christ delivers not only from the consequences of sin hereafter, but from the love and power of sin now—"He breaks the power of cancelled sin." But, according to Professor Mariano, the Papal Church offers salvation not from sin, but in sin. Thus, reversing the very mission of Christ, it is the *antithesis of Christianity.*

In another passage of his writings, or rather in one of his numerous speeches, he said: "*Il proprio, si sa bene, della Chiesa Cattolica-papale è di essere un istituto di assicurazione di salute per quei che interiormente non sono tocchi dalla potenza spirituale dell' Evangelo*" (The essence, as every one knows, of the Papal Catholic Church is to be a Society of Assurance of Salvation for those who inwardly are not touched by the spiritual power of the Gospel). That is to say, it is a Church that secures salvation to the unconverted, to the unregenerate, to those who have not been born anew.

The words do not imply that there are not converted, regenerated people inside the pale of the Papal Church—that there are not those who have been saved from sin. There are doubtless many such—many who are better than their creed—just as in Evangelical Churches there may be those who are unconverted, who are worse than their creed. But the words do imply that change of heart and life is not essential in the eyes of the Church in order to membership and salvation. Salvation shares, in this Papal Assurance Society, no more demand a moral change than the holding of shares in any railway or gas company, or in any ordinary Life Assurance Society. No wonder that Professor Mariano goes on to ask: "*Dovrà forse una chiesa che vuol chiamarsi veramente Cristiana, essere lo stesso?*" (Ought perhaps a Church which calls itself truly Christian to be such a thing?). In another passage he says: "I have been convinced by the study of Hegel's philosophy that the Pope and his Church are incapable of giving redemption and holiness."

Now in holding such convictions, and in making such statements in regard to the Papal Church, Professor Mariano does not stand alone. The Hon. Giovanni Bovio, a member of the House of Deputies, called the Papal Church "*un ramo che disicca sul tronco cristiano*" (a branch that is withering up on the tree of Christianity). In another passage he virtually says, what Professor Mariano has said, that it is impotent to give

redemption. He tells us how a Pope, showing all his money and riches to Thomas Aquinas, said: "You see, Thomas, the Church cannot now say what it said in early times, '*Argentum et aurum non est mihi*'" (Silver and gold have I none). "No," answered Aquinas, "nor can it say, '*Surge et ambula*'" (Rise up and walk), implying, says Sig. Bovio, that a Church impotent to say that is "*fuore di Cristo*" (outside of Christ). Again he contrasts Roman Catholicism and Christianity, saying: "*Il Cristianesimo può avere ancora una evoluzione nel popolo, ma il Cattolicismo è stagnante*" (Christianity may yet have a revival amongst the people, but Catholicism is stagnant).

It is interesting to find that the great statesman Crispi also distinguished between Roman Catholicism and Christianity. Once in the House of Deputies he said: "The day is coming when Christianity will kill Roman Catholicism." Again, when on his death-bed, receiving some papers from his friend, Signor Paratore, the well-known advocate, he handed them to his daughter, the Princess di Linguaglossa, to read aloud to him. As she took them, she said laughingly: "*Chi sa quanti attacchi contro la religione vi saranno contenuti?*" (Who knows what attacks on religion will be in them?). Sig. Crispi answered: "*Non è vero: egli interpreta i miei sentimenti; noi non attacchiamo la religione, non siamo irreligiosi. Siamo acattolici, anticlericali. La nostra religione*

è quello" '(It is not true. He shares my own opinions. We do not attack religion. We are not opposed to religion. We are anti-catholic, anti-clerical. Our religion is HE), pointing to the figure of Jesus Christ on a cross which always hung by his bedside. Garibaldi, too, is said to have declared the pure Gospel of Christ to be the very antithesis of Roman Catholicism.

There is thus a remarkable unanimity amongst Italian public men in declaring the Papal Church to be not a Christian Church at all, because incapable of bringing holiness into character and life; to be a compromise with and surrender to evil, because offering *salvation in sin*; to be indeed the very "*antithesis of Christianity*." And the same unanimity I have found to prevail amongst the poor and unlettered of Italy. A woman whom I knew, belonging to that class, was dying. She willingly received visits from Protestant friends who read and prayed with her. The parish priest found fault with her for this. The dying woman raised herself in her bed and indignantly answered: "These Protestants are better people than we are, for their religion does not permit them to sin, and then receive absolution, that they may go and sin again." It may be answered that neither does the Papal Church. It requires confession of sin, and penitence, before it gives absolution. Theoretically it is so, but in Italy at any rate, practically it is not. Neither confessor nor confessed ever seems to imagine that departure from evil forms part of the compact.

Mr. Gladstone, in his article on *Italy and her Church*, in the *Church Quarterly Review* for October 1875, says: "Profligacy, corruption, and ambition, continued for ages, unitedly and severally, their destructive work upon the country, through the *Curia* and the Papal Chair; and in doing it they of course have heavily tainted the faith of which that Chair was the guardian." Another writer has said that Roman Catholicism is "a series of external performances essentially distinct from morality." Sir Walter Scott in his *Journal*, on February 28, 1829, calls Popery "a mean and depraving superstition." Mr. Ruskin in his *Stones of Venice* calls it a "paralysed Christianity" in the animation of which "the arts of the Magus and Brahmin are exhausted"; and in his *Modern Painters* he speaks of "its corruptions, its cunning, its worldliness, and its permission of crime." Practically sin and absolution go together. As Mr. Froude, in his *History of England*, has said, referring to the Papal Church: "There are forms of superstition which can walk hand in hand with any depth of crime, when that superstition is provided with a talisman which will wash away the stains of guilt."

One of Mr. Gladstone's denunciations of the Papacy runs thus: "There has never been any more cunning blade devised against the freedom, the virtue, and the happiness of a people than Romanism;" and Dr. Arnold is not a whit less emphatic, for, speaking of what he calls "the

pretended conversion of the kingdoms of the world to the kingdom of Christ in the fourth and fifth centuries," he says: "It was one of the greatest *tours d'adresse* that Satan ever played, except his invention of Popery." Yes, as Professor Mariano has said, the Church is really "a Salvation Assurance Society for those who inwardly are not touched by the spiritual power of the Gospel." It is "*the antithesis of Christianity.*"

And history comes in to confirm this view of the matter. In Sir H. Wallop's address to Lord Burghley on the condition of Ireland, he says, as quoted by Froude in his *History*: "The causes of rebellion, my good Lord, as I conceive them, are these—the great affection they generally bear to the Popish religion which agreeth with their humour, that having committed murder, incest, thefts, with all other execrable offences, by hearing a mass, confessing themselves to the priest, or obtaining the Pope's pardon, they persuade themselves they are forgiven; and hearing mass on Sunday or holiday, they think all the week after they may do whatever heinous offence soever to be dispensed withal." In this we see the continuity of the character of the Papacy. It never changes. What it was in England in the sixteenth century it is in Italy in the twentieth—a compromise with evil—salvation in sin.

But we can go a step farther, logically we must go a step farther, and say that the Papal Church

may be, must be oftentimes, a direct incentive to evil. The dying woman's words imply this, when she said that the priest gave absolution, that one might go and sin again. So long as human nature is what it is, if one can compound with his fellow-man for his sins, the tendency will be to go on in sin. The offence and the absolution will naturally be found the more frequently in company. And the Church recognises this, for what is the meaning otherwise of dispensations? I know the Church will say that a dispensation is a suspension of the law in a particular case, where its exercise might cause injustice, but practically it is a licence to do injustice, to commit crime, or live in sin.

Pope Paul v. granted dispensations and pensions to any persons who would assassinate Fra Paolo Sarpi; Pope Pius v. offered, as Mr. Froude tells us, "remission of sin to them and their heirs, with annuities, honours, and promotions, to any cook, brewer, baker, vintner, physician, grocer, surgeon, or others," who would make away with Queen Elizabeth; and Pope Gregory XIII. offered a high place in heaven to any one who would murder the Prince of Orange; and the poor wretch, Balthazar Gerard, who did the infamous deed, actually told his judges "that he would soon be a saint in heaven, and would have the first place there next to God," whilst his family received a patent of nobility, and entered into possession of the estates of the Prince in the Franche Comté—rewards promised for the

commission of the crime by Cardinal Granvelle. Priests everywhere used to receive dispensations from the Pope, or from their superiors, to live in open breach of their vows. And what was "Benefit of Clergy"? Was it not "the straining of the law by ecclesiastical judges in favour of offenders in Holy Orders; the wrapping clerks in a cloak of naughtiness, and giving them liberty to sin?" As Mr. Froude says: "It was little else than a privilege to commit sins with impunity," and therefore a direct encouragement to sin.

But it may be objected that all this is a thing of the past. Is it? I am not aware that dispensations cannot be obtained at the present day to marry within the forbidden degrees, and to do in other ways that which is wrong. Not so long ago a young lady asked me if right and wrong were absolute qualities of actions, or if they were interchangeable, because she had been speaking on the subject with a priest, and he had said that he had the power to make what was in some circumstances wrong, right for her. Another friend of my own, suspected to be inclining towards Protestantism, was thus spoken to by another priest: "Now remember, God will never accept a Jew, nor a Protestant, no matter how good he may be; and God will never reject a Roman Catholic, no matter how bad he may be." In these instances what could be the effect of the priest's words but to incite to wrong-doing?

The year 1900 was decreed by the Papal Church

to be an *Anno Santo*, a Holy Year, and because of this it scattered Indulgences with a liberal hand. For example, all who went to Rome on pilgrimage, and visited St. Peter's, and went through the Holy Door, and attended services, were granted Indulgences. But what is an Indulgence? The word is connected with *dulcis*, sweet, and we have the adjective *indulgent*, yielding to one's wishes, and the verb to *indulge*, not to exercise restraint, to indulge one's desires and appetites. The meaning of Indulgence, then, is to throw off self-restraint, and the granting of Indulgences practically means the delegating to one the right to throw off self-restraint. I know that this is not the meaning of Indulgence theoretically. I have before me now a book of over five hundred pages, entitled *Manuale d'Indulgenze* (Manual of Indulgences), approved by the Holy Congregation of Indulgences and Holy Relics, and printed at the Pontifical Press, Rome, 1899. In this book there are several definitions of an Indulgence. One is: "An Indulgence is the remission of the temporal punishment due to sin already pardoned, a remission that the Church accords outside the tribunal of penitence." Another is: "An Indulgence is the remission of the temporal punishment that the Church grants for some good work," making a pilgrimage to Rome, for instance, visiting shrines and churches, kissing crosses, possessing objects of piety such as rosaries, crucifixes, medals, and statues which have been blessed by the Pope, so as to have become

enriched with Indulgences, all which things resolve themselves into a question of pounds, shillings, and pence.

There are different kinds of Indulgences. The definitions given are of "Ordinary" or "Partial Indulgences," which remit only "the temporal punishment due to sin"; but there are also "Plenary Indulgences," which remit "all the penalty that the sinner owes to Divine justice," that is, which remit not only the temporal but the eternal punishment due to sin. Then there are Indulgences, local, personal, royal, "*toties quoties*," Indulgences for the dead and for the living. Plenary Indulgence is associated with certain churches, such as St. John Lateran, which churches can pass on the privilege for a consideration to other churches. That is why one so often sees written above a church door the announcement: "Plenary Indulgence granted at all times, for the dead and for the living, according to St. John Lateran, Rome." Then, again, Plenary Indulgence is emphatically Jubilee Indulgence. And so in every Jubilee year, and there have been many of late, Plenary Indulgences, the remission of the temporal and eternal punishments of wrong-doing, have been given freely, or rather, I should say, have been sold freely, to thousands and to tens of thousands.

But now, if we push the inquiry one step farther back, and ask what is the natural consequence of thus divorcing wrong-doing from punishment, what is the natural result of thus separating sin from

suffering?—two things which God has irrevocably joined together,—we must admit it can only be to encourage continuance in wrong-doing, to incite to further sin. One can arrive at no other conclusion. *Judex damnatur cum nocens absolvitur*. If that be so—if the acquittal of the guilty, condemns the judge—how does that Church pronounce its own condemnation, which not only acquits the guilty, but puts a premium on their wrong-doing?

Let me bring forward another fact. There is a book which is the standard one on Morals in the Roman Catholic Church, the *Theologia Moralis* of Alfonso Maria de Liguori. I might say much about the teaching of this book as bearing on the matter under discussion, but, as it is the book used in confession, and I shall have occasion to refer to it again when treating of that subject, I shall say as little as possible about it here. The whole book from cover to cover is an incitement to sin. The evil of sin is minimised for Roman Catholics until it disappears altogether. When virtues are dealt with in Roman Catholic text-books they are, as Mr. Ruskin says, “Squared and counted and classified, and put into separate heaps of firsts and seconds; some things being virtuous cardinally, and other things being virtuous only north-north-west.” And so, when sins are dealt with, they are similarly classified. Liguori divides them into mortal, which dissolves friendship with God and merits eternal punishment; and venial, which only “brings on the

soul an easily curable weakness, and easily obtains pardon." And then he goes on to show how all mortal sins can become venial, and asserts "*that a Christian does not sin gravely who proposes to commit every one of the venial sins.*" Advancing one step farther, he shows how Roman Catholics can steal and cheat, and commit adultery and perjure themselves, and kill, even, with impunity. Thus, he says that one who steals to relieve real need does not sin, for he from whom he stole was bound in charity to relieve his needs. When one is asked in a court of justice, "Did you see this deed committed?" he can answer, "I say no," which will be accepted by the judge as a denial, but by which the witness means "I say the word no." If a woman is charged by her husband with having committed adultery with her confessor, she can deny it; for, having obtained absolution, it is the same as if she had not committed it.

The theologian Debeyne, who is the great commentator on the works of Liguori, in his *Machialogie*, Brussels, 1858, page 346, and following pages, gives instructions to the priests how to procure abortion in girls whom they may have seduced. Indeed, Liguori does not hesitate openly to advocate laxity of morals on the ground that by making religion easy the Roman Catholic Church will gain adherents. He even condemns a strict morality as positively evil, because tending to make religion odious. His system is *the deification of sin*. What Thomas Carlyle said of the system of Ignatius Loyola, of which

Liguori is the exponent : "Men had served the devil, and men had very imperfectly served God, but to think that God could be served more perfectly by taking the devil into partnership—this was a novelty of St. Ignatius," holds good of that of Liguori.

Thus, at the bar of history, on the testimony of those who know what it is, and by its own confession (and there is no more authoritative exponent of its creed than St. Alfonso de Liguori), the Papal Church is shown to be but an Assurance Society that offers salvation in sin, and that in many ways incites to sin. It is therefore not only not a Christian Church, but it is the very "*Antithesis of Christianity*." It has reached the third stage of its condition, according to the enumeration of no less an authority than Samuel Taylor Coleridge, who says: "The Papal Church has had three phases—*anti-cæsar*ian, *extra-national*, and ANTI-CHRISTIAN."

And what are the results or fruits of the Papal system? They are the very reverse of those produced by the Christian system, and so confirm the statement that it is the very antithesis of Christianity. "By their fruits ye shall know them." Wherever Christianity goes, no matter in connection with what communion, it makes the bad man good, and the good man better. The very Creation, groaning and travailing in pain, feels its influence: "The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad, and the desert shall rejoice and blossom as the rose." The effect of the Fall is counteracted, and all things

in man and nature are made new. A kingdom of righteousness is established. But wherever the Papal Church goes, the very opposite results follow. It makes good men bad, and bad men worse. It fetters trade and commerce, agriculture and industry — materially, intellectually, morally, and spiritually it destroys men and nations. The very blackest pages of human history have been written by the Papal Church. It is so in the history of England, of Scotland, of France, of the Netherlands, of Germany, and of Italy. Philip II. of Spain, acting in the name of Pope Pius III. and in the cause of the Church, decreed the death of a whole nation, and succeeded in murdering, according to Grotius, one hundred thousand men and women. His "Council of Blood," under the Duke of Alva, in three months' time put to death one thousand eight hundred Christians. Hence amongst the names most infamous in human history are those of devoted and eminent officials and servants of the Papal Church—the Popes I have just mentioned, to whom may be added the Borgias, and even the last Pope, Pio Nono, whom, after the massacres in Romagna, Cavour denounced before Europe as a butcher, Ferdinand II. of Naples (Bomba), Philip II. of Spain, Charles V. of Germany, Bloody Mary, Mary Stuart, and the Duke of Alva. All these inhuman creatures were the legitimate offspring of the Papal creed. The result is that the nations which are Papal are low down in the moral scale. Mr. Ruskin,

in his *Stones of Venice*, speaks of "the peculiar degradation of the Romanist superstition and of public morality in consequence, which brought about the Reformation"; and when writing of Venice in its decadence, he says, "The whole system of morality had been by this time undermined by the teaching of the Romish Church." And the same deteriorating effects of Roman Catholicism are seen in those fractions of countries, like certain cantons of Switzerland, certain provinces in Ireland, and certain towns in Canada, that are Roman Catholic. In regard to Switzerland, there is the remarkable testimony borne by Charles Dickens in a letter he wrote in 1845 to his friend and biographer, Mr. Forster. Mr. Dickens says: "In the Simplon, hard by here, where (at the bridge of St. Maurice over the Rhone) the Protestant canton ends and a Catholic canton begins, you might separate two perfectly distinct and different conditions of humanity by drawing a line with your stick in the dust on the ground. On the Protestant side—neatness, cheerfulness, industry, education, continued aspiration, at least, after better things. On the Catholic side—dirt, disease, ignorance, squalor, and misery. I have so constantly observed the like of this since I first came abroad, that I have a sad misgiving that the religion of Ireland lies at the root of all its sorrows." In another letter, written from Genoa in 1846, he adds: "If I were a Swiss, with a hundred thousand pounds, I would be as steady against the Catholic

canons and the propagation of Jesuitism as any Radical among them; believing the dissemination of Catholicity to be the most horrible means of political and social degradation left in the world."

Not less remarkable is the testimony borne by Mr. Michael McCarthy, himself a Catholic, in his book, *Five Years in Ireland*, from which I have already quoted. On pages 65 and 66, describing the welcome extended to Lord Cadogan on his first visit in 1895 to the Protestant North of Ireland, he says the Belfast Corporation used the following words: "We are pleased to be able to assure your Excellency of the peaceful and prosperous condition of our city and district, and the full employment of our population, and the continued development of our industries. During the past fifty years the city has grown from a population of 70,000 to nearly 300,000." The Town Commissioners of Lisburn, a centre of linen industry, Mr. McCarthy tells us, used similar language: "Our town is progressing and prospering. During twenty years it has increased, in value and population, forty per cent. Our workpeople are fully employed, and on good terms with their employers." Mr. McCarthy then, on page 67, contrasts this happy condition of things with the unhappy state of the "Rest of Ireland," by which phrase he designates the Catholic parts. He says: "In the Rest of Ireland there is no social or industrial progress to record. The man who would say of it that it was 'progressing and

prospering,' or that 'its workpeople were fully employed,' or that there existed 'a continued development of its industries,' or that its towns 'had increased in value and population,' would be set down as a madman. It is in this seven-eighths of Ireland that the growing and great organisation of the Catholic Church has taken root."

Elsewhere Mr. McCarthy shows how it has taken root; whilst thousands of peasants are emigrating to earn a livelihood, and thousands are on the poor-rates—the amount of outdoor relief being, as I had occasion to note (page 44), two shillings and threepence per head at Mullingar against about one penny three-farthings in Belfast—the bishops and priests were enlarging cathedrals, building churches, and erecting steeples, at a cost of thousands of pounds (as at Letterkenny, where a church cost £60,000, and at Armagh, where another cost £100,000), all of which was wrung from the hands of these same destitute people. What a commentary on the influence of Roman Catholicism is the fact told me by a Dublin proprietor, that the opening of a new church in that city depreciates all surrounding property, like the opening of a public house.

Mr. Gladstone once said that there was more crime in Scotland than in Ireland. The statement was half a truth, and therefore a most misleading falsehood. There was more crime, but a large part of it was committed by Irish Roman Catholics. In a leading article on the criminal statistics for Scot-

land for the year 1901, the *Scotsman* said: "If Scotland could keep out the Irish, its crime would be reduced by about two-fifths. On the last day of 1901 the prisoners in the Scottish prisons consisted of 1620 Scots, 167 English, 1092 Irish, and 26 foreigners. The religious denominations were 1633 Presbyterians, 165 Episcopalians, 1103 Roman Catholics, and 4 of other denominations. The Roman Catholics are about 10 per cent. of the population, so that they are about five times as criminal as the Protestants."

In a paper written by Mr. Hobart Seymour on the "Comparative Morality of Protestantism and Popery," he gives the following results, founded on Governmental official returns. The illegitimate births annually on an average of ten years were, in Roman Catholic Brussels, 35 per cent., in Paris 33, in Munich 48, and in Vienna 51; whilst in Protestant London they were 4, in Birmingham 6, in Manchester 7, and in Liverpool 6. The murders similarly calculated were annually in Belgium 18 to a million of the population, in France 31, in Bavaria 32, and in Austria 36, whilst in England they were 4. In every country the criminals who profess the Papal creed are out of all proportion to those of other religions, or even of no religion. The result is that the Papal Church is too often what Mr. Ruskin calls it in his *Stones of Venice*—"the Church of the unholy."

And then there is another result. Mr. Gladstone

in his book, *The Impregnable Rock of Holy Scripture*, says: "Whenever, under the idea of magnifying the grace or favour of God, we derogate from His immutable righteousness and justice, and whenever, in exalting the unspeakable mercy of His pardon, we unhinge its inseparable alliance with a profound and penetrating moral work in the creature pardoned, then we draw down dangers upon the Christian system greater far than can ever be entailed upon it by its enemies." If the separation between pardon and purity, between justification and sanctification, bears such fruit, even when the motive for doing so is such a lofty one as Mr. Gladstone assumes, how much more evil must it be when the motive is as unworthy as the action itself, namely, to gain adherents to a communion, or to gain money and the influence money brings?

As a matter of fact, the evil done to true religion in Italy by the Papacy is incalculable. Italians know this well. It has destroyed not only the religious instincts but the moral sense of many of its own adherents. Professor Mariano says, speaking more especially of the upper classes in Italy: "With a few honourable exceptions, they present to us a large army of minds whose existence is a perpetual moral somnolence; unable to believe, they have not moral strength enough to disbelieve anything seriously. They are Catholics for social convenience or opportunism." Again, he says, it has made religion "a pure formalism; it has no

power over the morals of the people. It does not attract or educate or edify the masses, but simply holds them under its sway by force of habit, by inert traditionalism; and its ultimate result can only be ignorant credulity in the midst of ignorant incredulity." It has made it a distinctly discreditable thing to attend church if the person so doing is submissive to its priestly authority. Hence out of Italy's thirty odd millions of inhabitants, it has forced twenty millions, on principle—on the principle of common sense, of patriotism, and of morality—to refuse to cross its threshold. These have realised that its services are not only incompatible with edification, but even with common honesty. They talk of the Church, and all that goes on in it, as a *spettacolo*, a theatrical display; realising, to use the words of Mr. Ruskin in his *Stones of Venice*, that "Darkness and mystery; confused recesses of building; artificial light employed in small quantity, but maintained with a constancy which seems to give it a kind of sacredness, preciousness of material easily comprehended by the vulgar eye, close air loaded with a sweet and peculiar odour associated only with religious services, solemn music, and tangible idols or images having popular legends attached to them—these, *the stage properties of superstition*, which have been from the beginning of the world, and must be to the end of it, employed by all nations, whether openly savage, or nominally civilised, to produce a false awe in minds incapable of apprehending the

true nature of the Deity." Such realise, again to quote Mr. Ruskin, the "fatuity" of going to church "to seek for the unity of a living body of truth and trust in God with a dead body of lies and trust in wood." And of those who go to church, many go simply to say their prayers, hating the whole Papal system. But if any one does so, becoming what we should call an effective church member, then the discredit of which I have spoken is so great that instantly people imagine that he has some secret reason for his action, that he is living in sin. They are apt to point the finger at him and to say, "*Quello è un birbone*" (That man is a scoundrel), and, I am sorry to say, the verdict is too often a just one. The most *religiosi* people in Italy are always the least esteemed. Marie Corelli, in her *Master Christian*, makes a cardinal speak the truth when she puts these words into his mouth: "The Church appeals to the ignorant, the base, the sensual, the false, and the timorous, and knowing that they never repent, but are only afraid, retains them by fear."

Lastly, the Papal Church has bestowed the name Christian on thousands who are strangers to the power of our most holy faith. It has created infidels and atheists. Indeed, most of the infidelity and atheism in Italy lie at the door of the Papal Church. It has so falsified Christianity that thousands have no true conception of what it is. It has not only driven millions of Italy's religious thinking inhabitants outside its own pale, but it has prejudiced

them against all Churches. It has made the Evangelising and the Christianising of the country a much more difficult thing than it might otherwise have been. Still, in spite of all obstacles, true religion is being understood, and is obtaining a place in the hearts of the people, who are beginning to understand that it is a thing of the heart and of the life, not a thing of external rites and forms, far less a Papal dispensation to live in sin; that "the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost." Signs can even now be descried of the dawning of that happy day, foretold, as I have already said, by Signor Crispi, when "*Christianity will kill Roman Catholicism.*"

V

The Church

"The Pope's Shop"

THE above definition of the Papal Church, "The Pope's Shop," is as little complimentary as the one already considered, "The Antithesis of Christianity." But this definition, like the other, is not mine, nor does it owe its origin to a Protestant source. It was invented long ago by its own sons and daughters, and it has been for years in general use, though never more so than at the present time. The Italian original is *La Bottega del Papa*, and one comes across these words constantly in magazines, in newspapers, and in private correspondence, and one hears them frequently in conversation. Indeed, it is one of the most common designations of the Papal Church. Sometimes, as in a letter I have just received from an Italian professor of literature, it is varied with a phrase equally forceful and significant, *La Santa Bottega* (The Holy Shop).

Such a long-standing, deeply-rooted, and widespread idea of the Roman Catholic Church being, in

one aspect of its character, a business concern, could not exist unless it had some foundation in fact, and unless that fact was very patent to the world. And this supposition is correct. One cannot even glance cursorily at the history of the Papal Church, nor even superficially examine its present condition, without being struck with the commercial aspect of its doings. It trades and traffics in holy things. It relegates even the holiest of its ceremonies, the centre of its worship, into the category of wares. Indeed, there is a great amount of truth in the popular belief in Italy that there is nothing to be got from the Church without money, and nothing that cannot be got for it; that it is ready to do anything for money, and that it will do nothing without it. Everything is a matter of arrangement and accommodation. And it is not merely in holy things it traffics, I am afraid, but in unholy. If Roman Catholicism is a compromise between sin and religion, it is not so for nothing; if it is the *Antithesis of Christianity*, offering, practically, to all salvation in sin, it does so for value received. Its every action when analysed resolves itself into a business transaction. As the Italians say, it is all a matter of *soldi*, or, as we say, of pounds, shillings, and pence. "*Oro non fa odore*," says the priest—"Gold," no matter how got, "has no bad smell."

We know from history that the commercial character of the Papal Church shocked the sense of Europe in the sixteenth century, and was

one of the main causes that brought about the Reformation.

There was the recognised trade of the pardoner, a man who hawked about Indulgences, as any common pedlar did his wares. The name of the Dominican monk, Tetzels, "who went about with bells and fifes, and a suite behind him like a procession of the priests and priestesses of Cybele," and against whom Luther launched his thesis, is known to all in this connection.

"Oh! see my favours are so cheap,
Now grasp into your pockets deep,
And he who goes the deepest down,
Shall wear in heaven the highest crown."

The Church Consistory Courts which were set up in every town in Christendom were simply shops. These courts took account of all offences, real and imaginary, offences against the moral law, the law of the realm, and canon law. But no matter what the offences were, whether murder and robbery, or eating meat on Fridays and talking disrespectfully of the counterfeit bones of a saint, all were alike readily expiable by the payment of a fine. Indeed, as every one knows, many of the ordinances of the Church, and decretals of the Popes, were promulgated for pecuniary gain. Then, as the Church had spies in every household, and canon law was a gin and a snare and a pitfall for every honest man, a stream of accused persons was constantly pouring into the courts, and a

stream of gold constantly pouring into the exchequer of the Church.

Mortuary imposts were another profitable source of income for the Church. These were exacted in money and in kind. As the hangman claimed the last suit of clothes worn by the condemned man, so priests in England claimed the suit last worn by those they buried, and in Scotland they claimed the counterpane of the bed on which a man died, and until these and many similar extortions were satisfied, they would refuse to bury, or they would impound the dead man's goods. As Latimer said, "No emperor had taken more by taxes of his living subjects than those truly begotten children of this world obtained by dead men's tributes." We know, too, how the Mortmain Statutes were framed to prevent the Church Corporations from getting hold of real property to the disinheritation of the heirs.

Amongst the unholy articles offered for sale in the "Pope's Shop" were licences to break the laws, and dispensations to live in sin. These articles were in constant demand, so that this was a most lucrative branch of business. At the Reformation, lists of such persons were called for by the English Government, and these lists still exist in the State Papers Office. Mr. Froude, in his *History of England*, transcribes some of them. From these we learn that not only lay persons, but deans, vicars, and parish priests, compounded for money to be allowed to live without admonition in the grossest licentiousness.

Benefices were another article of commerce. Of these bishops and priests were accustomed to hold several at a time, and to buy and sell them for gain. It was not uncommon to induct a mere boy, or even an infant, into a cure of souls for the sake of a fee.

Then religious services of every kind were articles sold at a money rate. Purchase was the only way to obtain them. Nor did the priests care to give credit. Most of them adopted the ready-money system. In the "Act of Accusation" against the clergy, laid on the table of the British House of Commons in 1529, was the charge that "Parsons, vicars, curates, parish priests, and other spiritual persons having cure of souls, do exact and take divers sums of money for the sacraments and sacramentals of the Holy Church, sometimes denying the same without they be first paid the said sums of money." Chief of these articles was of course the mass, said or sung either to save the living or to mitigate the purgatorial sufferings of the dead.

Saints and their relics, such as the articles of clothing they wore, and the spoons and dishes they used in eating, were all sources of revenue. Thomas à Becket's blood was sold for several centuries, until Thomas Cranmer proved it to be a mixture of red ochre. Holy roods and crosses, like that at Dovercourt in Essex, which was "strong as a giant," or that at Boxley in Kent, which at times "did stir like a living thing," were all valuable

Church stock in trade. The priests sold daily from year's end to year's end the medicinal efficacy and the efflorescence of sanctity that such things were said to emit. Hundreds of images and shrines of the Madonna, and things that belonged to her in the shape of boots and shoes, veils and handkerchiefs, a bottle of the milk with which she nourished Christ, besides household utensils, and the house itself with a marble fireplace, were all exhibited as yielding blessing to a credulous populace at a money rate. Nor was Christ Himself spared, for just as He Himself was sold daily on the altar in the mass, so money was made by the display in different churches, at different times, of His cradle and baby-clothes ; of His teeth, hair, and nails ; of the bread and fish He multiplied ; of His shoes and seamless coats (not one but two) ; of the table, plates, and knives used by Him at the Last Supper ; of the towel with which He dried the disciples' feet ; of the ass on which He made His triumphal entry into Jerusalem ; of everything connected with His crucifixion ; of the iron bolt of Hades He brought away with Him from that doleful region ; even of the tears He shed, and of the blood that dropt from His feet, hands, and side. And, as Samuel Rogers has recounted,

"A ray, imprimis, of the star that shone
To the Wise Men ; a vial full of sounds,
The musical chimes of the great bells that hung
In Solomon's Temple ; and, though last not least,
A feather from the Angel Gabriel's wing,
Dropt in the Virgin's chamber."

Emphatically on the page of history the Papal Church figures as *La Bottega del Papa*, *La Santa Bottega*, The Pope's Shop.

And what about this aspect of the Papal Church at the present time? Is it less a shop now than formerly? I do not believe it. It may be less visibly such, but it is not less one in reality. There may be fewer goods displayed in the window, and the front portal may be but half open, and it may advertise its wares less shamelessly, but the trade and traffic goes on as briskly as ever in what the Italians call the *retrobottega*, the back shop.

Let me take the last class of goods referred to. All the articles I have mentioned as relics of our Lord, and many more I might mention, are still in existence, and, with few exceptions, are still sources of gain. Rome, for example, contains not a few of them. The cradle is in the church of Santa Maria Maggiore; the teeth and hair in that of Santa Croce in Gerusalemme; the *camicia*, the table of the Last Supper, and the towel used at the feet-washing, are all in S. Giovanni in Laterano; the iron bar of Hades is in a room over the Santa Scala; and in other churches there are His swaddling-clothes, specimens of the bread and fish miraculously multiplied, the impression of His feet, the temple altar on which He was presented, the column against which He leaned when disputing with the doctors, and that to which He was tied when scourged, and most of the things connected with the crucifixion. But the profits

accruing from all these spurious relics of Christ sink into nothingness in comparison with the gigantic gains accruing from the exhibition of Christ Himself in the church of the Aracoeli on the Capitol, in the shape of the *Santo Bambino*. Almost all visitors to Rome go to see this *spettacolo*. The *Bambino* is a doll about three feet high, and it stands on a cushion in a glass case. It is clad in rich robes, with a crown on its head, a regal order across its breast, and embroidered slippers on its feet. From head to foot it is one mass of dazzling jewellery, gold chains, strings of pearls, and diamond bracelets and rings, which not only cover the neck, arms, and fingers, but are suspended, intermixed with crosses, stars, hearts, monograms, and every kind of precious stone, to all parts of its body. The only part unweighted with gems is its round, priest-like, wax face.

But all this display of wealth, great in itself, is really only suggestive of that untold quantity which it has brought, and is daily bringing, into the coffers of the Church. People are continually kneeling before this dumb idol, offering petitions and leaving gifts, whilst letters containing requests, accompanied with post-office orders and cheques to pay for the granting of the same, arrive by post for it from various parts of the globe. It is also borne, on special occasions, in procession to the bedrooms of the sick that it may exercise its healing virtue. The mother of a friend of my own had it brought to her. Its visit cost her some thousands of francs. And after

all she died! Her son wants to prosecute it for *truffa* (swindling). There is a story in connection with its feet. At first it had only stumps, but being taken one night to the bedside of an impenitent, it promptly developed feet and ran away. By and by the pit-a-pat of little feet was heard by the monks of the monastery that used to be attached to the Aracœli, and then a rap-a-tap at the door, when, opening it, lo! there was the blessed baby, feet and all, and it quickly ran back into its glass case upon the altar.

The *Asino* of January 26, 1902, records that at Leghorn, in the church of S. James, there was put up for sale by lottery "*un Gesù bambino vecchio*" (an old baby Jesus), that is, a wooden doll of some sort representing Christ, and that with the proceeds, or with part of them, there was purchased "*un Gesù bambino nuovo*" (a new baby Jesus). Jesus bought and sold by lottery!

The traffic in Madonnas has not only not decreased, but has vastly increased, since Reformation times. For example, every village in Italy, every parish in the land, has its own Madonna, with its own special festival day, whilst the towns and cities have scores of them in their churches. All these Madonnas have different names, and are credited with different powers, so that their worshippers are sure to find, by applying to one or other, the article that they want. Thus, each of them, dressed up in gay ribbons and a silk or satin gown, with a tinsel crown on its

head, a sceptre in its hand, a puppet on its knee, and a money-box at its feet, is simply a dummy saleswoman in the "Pope's Shop," parting with pretended powers to credulous customers for value received in cash. And what is the shrine of Loreto, which contains the Madonna's image made by St. Luke, and the very house she lived in at Nazareth, made, however, of bricks of clay found in the valley below; or that of Lourdes, founded some forty odd years ago, because there an unlettered peasant girl of hysterical mind said she had seen the Virgin, both of which shrines are visited year after year by tens of thousands of pilgrims—what are these but branches of Papal trade, pushed vigorously by Pope and priest because of the wealth they bring? Some shrines are, I believe, company concerns, bringing in higher dividends to their priestly shareholders than any honest business ever yielded. New Madonnas, too, are from time to time being discovered, like that one dug but lately out of a field at Persano, near Salerno, which, when exhibited, was visited by thousands of people, so that the Church's drawings from the show amounted in a few weeks to ten pounds' weight of gold articles and ten thousand francs in cash.

The traffic in saints and their relics, like that in Madonnas, is steadily increasing. As an Italian said to me the other day, "Whenever the Church wants money, it pulls out another saint." For every new saint means a new festival day, and all such days are, as the Italians say, "*giorni di mercato clericale, con*

raddoppiamento d'imposture, e di affari bottegai" (priests' market-days, with a redoubling of imposture, and of shop-business). Tons of candles and oil are sometimes got by one church on the festival of its saint. On such an occasion I have seen the church itself surrounded, and all the roads leading to it lined, by the stalls of dealers in candles. These were bought by the poor people, carried into the church, and handed to the priests. A certain number were consumed on the altars, but I have seen cart-loads being afterwards removed, to be turned, I am assured by those who know, into cash. The candle trade is a profitable branch of Papal business. Besides such things, a roaring trade is generally carried on at such times in rosaries blessed by the Pope, in scapularies, crosses, relics of saints, and other "objects of piety," in all of which the Church has a greater or less pecuniary interest.

Some of the most extraordinary relics I ever heard of are those of St. Labre. He was a French saint, and his saintliness, like that of many of his class, consisted to a large extent in dirtiness. He never changed his clothes, he never washed. When he died, his filthy garments, the vermin that infested him and them, the unclean wooden bowl he used for food, and other equally disgusting things, were all preserved and pronounced to be holy and miracle-working. They are now in a chapel in the Via de' Crociferi, near the Fontana di Trevi, in Rome. I know an instance of the bowl having been taken to

a dying lady, who tenderly caressed it, but to no purpose—her fee was money thrown away. I am assured that the still more objectionable relics of this precious saint, in a mummified state, are always kept in stock, and are carried to the sick.

And what about the *paglia del Santo Padre, del giaciglio Vaticano*? (the straw of the pallet of the Holy Father in the Vatican). The *Asino* newspaper of June 23, 1901, published in Rome, represents a priest saying: "We have still in stock sixteen hundredweight of it." It is not much asked for in Italy, where the luxurious liberty the Pope enjoys is too well known, but elsewhere the fable of the Pope's imprisonment is still circulated, and straw from his dungeon is still sold. In this connection I may say that one of the very latest novelties of the "Pope's Shop" is a penny-in-the-slot blessing machine. A penny is dropped into it. The cinematograph goes round, when, lo! there appears a procession of courtiers, the Swiss Guards, and attendants bearing the Pope in a sedan chair. When in front of the spectator, the attendants stand aside, the Pope turns towards the window of his chair, raises his hand, and gives his blessing. On these machines there is an inscription to the effect that this blessing is equivalent to that given personally by the Pope in St. Peter's. Specimens of this were to be seen in 1900 in the Corso, Rome, about half-way between the Piazza Colonna and the Piazza del Popolo. Cheap "Blessing Pictures" of the Pope, similarly

guaranteed, are a kindred novelty. Truly up-to-date ways of turning an honest penny!

An extraordinary speculation on the part of the *Santa Bottega* is reported from a place called Immensee, Canton Schwyz, Switzerland. This is a St. Anthony Bank, in connection with a *Scuola Apostolica di Betlemme* (Apostolic School of Bethlehem). The *Asino* of March 9, 1902, contains an account of this enterprise, reproducing a facsimile of one of its shares and one of its coupons. On the share there is written: "Mortgage obligation for five francs, divided into ten coupons of fifty centimes each, founded upon the spiritual treasury of good works, prayers, and holy masses of the Institute of Bethlehem, and in particular upon the Apostolic School of Immensee." On the coupon are the following words: "*Cedola di 50 centesimi, pagabile quaggiù in contanti e rimborsabile in cielo alla cassa di S. Antonio*" (Coupon for fifty centimes, payable here below in cash, and repayable in heaven at the Bank of St. Anthony). Share and coupon both bear a figure of St. Anthony with the infant Christ in his arms, and the coupon has a note stating that the holder is entitled to a metal pocket-image of that saint. The *Asino* denounces the whole thing as a *truffa* (swindle) of Italian foreign missionaries, and indeed it has been denounced also by the Bishop of Strasburg, and brought under the notice of the criminal prosecutor of the canton, who, however, has declined to act.

I have been told that in Mexico the priests have a plan of heaven, after the fashion of a modern theatre plan, so that people can choose and secure their seats at different prices, the dearest being those nearest the Virgin, who is the centre of the Roman Catholic's heaven. One is not greatly surprised to find such a shameless imposition in Mexico, where there is the best market in the world for straw from the Pope's pallet, but one is surprised to find shares and coupons on St. Anthony's Bank in heaven being sold at the present time in Switzerland!

Nor has the sale of religious services, such as masses, *tridui*, benedictions, baptisms, marriages, mortuary offices, and funerals, diminished since Reformation times. I saw lately in an Italian newspaper quotations from the *Libro delle Tasse* and the *Tariffa dei Peccati*, the "Book of Taxes" and the "Tariff for Sins," with a pictorial representation of a gentleman confessing sins to his priest, who was sitting at his table making out the bill! I do not know that things are done in so cut and dry a way, but every church is more or less a shop for the sale of religious services. In the sacristies of many of them there are bureaus where masses can be ordered of different kinds, paid for, and receipts obtained for them, just as at a business office one orders a sack of potatoes or a ton of coals. And as these masses are of different qualities, one has a choice, and pays according to a tariff rate. Some friends of

my own have paid as much as a thousand francs for a funeral service. On the other hand, I have known such a service cost but a few *soldi*, which trifle, however, those concerned were unable to pay, when the priest refused to officiate until the police were called in to compel him. Many priests have no cure of souls, and so saying masses is their only means of earning a livelihood ; and but a poor livelihood it is, for an ordinary mass only costs a franc or a franc and a half, and a priest cannot legally say more than one a day, except at Christmas. However, the following regulation is in his favour. He is allowed to accept payment for as many as he can pick up. At the end of the month he goes to his bishop with the unsaid surplus, who allows him to keep a certain percentage on the money received for them. The bishop then takes the balance, and by saying a specially big mass, called a *messone*, wipes them all off. Thus a monthly balance is struck, and a monthly clearance effected. Each month begins with a "clean slate." The monks of the monastery of the Passionists at Gensano used to get annually from a rich neighbouring proprietor a present of wine for use in the mass. One day they discovered that the wine was made from apples, not from grapes. Horrified, they rushed off to Rome to consult Pio Nono about it. The Pope consoled them, saying that it did not matter, as he could say a *messone* that would more than compensate for what was lacking in their masses. That is to say, if theirs only got a

soul thirty days out of purgatory instead of sixty, his would rectify it.

In the *Foreign Church Chronicle* for September 1884 there is an interesting article entitled "Systematic Traffic in Masses," which tells how a publishing house in Paris acts as commission agents for the transmission of masses from city parish priests, who might have too many, to country village priests who might have too few. This publishing house presumably gave a better percentage than the bishops. Such middlemen are to be found in many places for the carrying on of the business of the mass-market. What I heard an Italian say in public is true: "The mass is an illicit trade for filthy lucre by which the poor may never enter heaven, but only the rich, who with their money may not only gain a paradise here below, and escape hell hereafter, but even escape purgatory, of which tremendous fire the priests have made themselves the fire-men at so much a flame." "What was your offertory to-day?" asked an Irish priest of an English clergyman, as they met returning from their respective services. "Very small," was the answer; "about a pound. And what was yours?" "Oh, mine was about five," replied the priest. The Protestant clergyman looking surprised, the priest added, "Do you know what to do if you want a big offertory? Preach purgatory, my friend, preach purgatory." With good reason does Dean Alford,

in commenting on 1 Cor. iii. 13, call purgatory a "lucrative fiction."

The tariff rate for Indulgences may have been abolished, but the receiver of them knows perfectly well that he must pay for them in some shape or other. Hence the enormous sums of money and quantities of goods that were poured into the lap of the Church during these Jubilee years, ostensibly as gifts, but really as purchase money for the Indulgences the Pope scattered at those times with such a liberal hand. I do not suppose any one received a brick of the Pope's "Holy Door" as a relic for nothing. And why are these Jubilees so frequent? As the *Daily Graphic* said: "Every year or so now sees the celebration of some Jubilee of the Pope's official life." In twenty-one years he has had no less than fourteen of them. Dispensations are also virtually sold. Canon law cannot now happily be enforced, but those who choose to recognise it can compound for its breach by money. I lately heard of a lady who told her priest that she could not eat fish on Fridays for two reasons—it did not suit her, and it was too dear. Like Erasmus, she had a "Catholic heart" but a "Lutheran stomach." The priest at once offered to procure her a "Dispensation," but she had to pay for it.

Divorces and liberty to marry within the forbidden degrees of consanguinity are still sold by the Pope for money. Every one knows how in 1888 the Duke of Aosta was permitted to marry his niece, the

Princess Lætitia, for a fee of some hundred thousand francs ; and I personally know uncles and nieces who were similarly allowed to marry on their disbursing sums supposed to be proportionate to their means.

And what are Religious Houses to a large extent but branches of the great Papal shop? Before the passing of the recent French laws in regard to such houses, M. Clemenceau published a report regarding them in which he said that two thousand five hundred monasteries were engaged in trade, which deleteriously affected the French tradesman in almost every line of business. The favourite traffic, however, of the monks in France, as it is in Italy, and wherever they exist, is in alcoholic drinks. He said : "Five religious communities sell wine wholesale, six sell liquors wholesale, two alcohol exclusively, four sell liquors retail, seven are licensed as distilleries, and nine as inns, with billiard playing allowed." The trade of some of these was enormous. *La Grande Chartreuse* made a profit of half a million pounds sterling, and paid a tax of over five hundred thousand pounds to the Papal See. Here in Venice the monks of the well-known Armenian monastery, on the picturesque island of San Lazzaro, which has not been suppressed because under Turkish rule, are wine-makers and wine-sellers. They have houses and vineyards on the Lido, where wine is extensively sold, wholesale and retail.

I see by an advertisement that Caravaca, a small town in the province of Murcia, in Spain, has

developed a new branch of trade in the *Santa Bottega* business. Its staple article of sale used to be the healing power of a miraculous cross, to which thousands betook themselves on its annual festival day, the 3rd of May. Now it has on sale healing water from its sanctuary. The advertisement runs thus: "One bottle of water from the Sacred Fountain, including package and postage, one franc seventy-five centimes," that is, about eighteenpence. It is said that this *Santa Bottega* sells thousands and thousands of bottles. However much of a fraud this water may be, it is a trade less objectionable than many in which the Church engages.

I am sure the Italians have only too good grounds for applying to the Roman Catholic Church the opprobrious epithet that heads this paper. The commercial aspect of its character is constantly before their eyes, nor can it be hid from the eyes of any who have their attention turned to it. In this characteristic, as in that of others equally reprehensible, it is *semper eadem*. The language Mr. Ruskin used when lecturing at the London Institution, in 1876, to describe its treatment of St. Mark's Church, Venice, is capable of a wider application: "They have made it a den of thieves, and these stones of Venice here in my hand are rags of the sacred robes of her Church, sold and mocked like her Master. They have parted her garments, and cast lots upon her vesture." Indeed, that the Church is what I have endeavoured in this chapter to show, a

shop, and a bad shop too, Pope Leo X. openly avowed, its gains in his eyes covering all its delinquencies; for, as we have already seen, he said: "*È un affare che frutta tanto bene, che sarebbe vera pazzia aprire gli occhi agli ignoranti*" (It is an affair that is so fruitful, that it would be sheer folly to open the eyes of the ignorant). Thus, as on the page of history, so in actual twentieth-century life, the Roman Catholic Church is emphatically *La Bottega del Papa*.

The fact is a very sad one. It scandalises the minds of Italians to-day as it scandalised those of the Reformers in the sixteenth century. And it does incredible damage to religion itself, for many brought up to identify *religion* with the *Church*, unable to separate these two distinct, and in the case of the Papal Church, conflicting things, in turning in disgust from the one, turn also in disgust from the other. With the question ever on its lips "What will ye give me?" the Papal Church is the Judas of Christ and Christianity. Trading and trafficking, like its prototype the Babylon of Revelation, "in odours and ointments and frankincense, and wine and oil and fine flour, and slaves and souls of men," we can yet look forward in hope and confidence to the time when "no man" shall buy "its merchandise" any more; when bankruptcy and beggary shall overtake this *Bottega del Papa*, this *Santa Bottega*, this THE POPE'S SHOP.

VI

The Church

A Political Conspiracy

ENGLISH Roman Catholics, when talking or writing of their Church, always assume that it should be looked at exclusively from a *religious* standpoint. Indeed, those of them who are in public life, as, for example, members of the House of Lords and of the House of Commons, never hint at the barest possibility of looking at it in any other way. The supposition that it is a religious institution, and nothing but that, underlies every reference they make to it.

And Protestants are only too apt to accept their position, and to concede their claim. Whilst smiling at the arrogance and intolerance of their assertion that it is the only Christian Church in existence, they yet readily grant that it is a Christian Church, and are only too content to leave out of sight the question whether it be not something else and something more as well. Hence, from this religious standpoint, the injustice of the Roman Catholic

Disabilities Acts, and the necessity, on the principle of religious equality, which we all accept, of their abolition.

But to regard the Roman Catholic Church exclusively from a religious standpoint gives us a very limited idea of it, so limited as to be altogether defective and misleading. Indeed, in Italy this aspect of it is often left entirely out of account. For its religiousness is but a small feature of its character, and it is one entirely dwarfed even by those others of which I have already spoken, under the heads "The Antithesis of Christianity" and "The Pope's Shop," but it drops into utter insignificance, and is not worthy of being regarded at all, in view of that feature of it, we have now to consider, namely, its *political* character. Whenever and wheresoever the Roman Catholic Church has been in the ascendant, it has been a Political Institution, and whenever and wheresoever it has been out of power it has been a Political Conspiracy. We read in the Life of Michael Angelo that he received an order from Pope Julius II. to execute his statue in marble. The great sculptor proceeded with his task, but came to a standstill, not knowing what to place in the Pope's right hand. Michael Angelo thought of a book, and going to the Pope: "Would you allow me, your Holiness, to put a book in your right hand?" "Nothing of the kind," said the Pope. "Put a sword; I know how to handle that better." Indeed, at the consecration of every Pope a sword is laid upon the

altar—the sword of St. Peter—and he swears to use it in defence of the Church.

As we have seen in Chapter I., “An Historic Retrospect,” the Papal Church was in power in Italy up till 1870, and the only character it assumed in the face of the world was that of a political institution, and, as such, it was one of the most despotic, most cruel, most unrighteous that ever oppressed and degraded a people; and the Sovereign Pope was known as “the Jailer and the Butcher” of Italy.

Christendom has cause to thank God that the temporal power of the Pope and his priestly government have been destroyed for ever. The Italians have immortalised their deliverance from it in a thousand ways. One cannot visit Rome, and walk up the broad street called “The 20th September” (*Via Venti Settembre*), and pass out by the old historic gateway of *Porta Pia*, and see the monuments erected to “Victory,” to “*Roma Redenta*” (Rome Redeemed), and read the words, “When to universal right twice Roman-like asserted, the fates added the free conscience of humanity, by this breach Italy re-entered Rome,” and the names of the Italians who fell storming that breach in the wall, cut in the granite rock, without feeling that Italy regards this triumph as the greatest in the annals of her history. Nor can one be in any spot in the Peninsula, even in the remotest and obscurest of its country hamlets, on the 20th of September, the

anniversary of that breach, and conquest, and destruction of Papal sovereignty, without feeling that that date is held to be the most glorious, the most joyous, and the most sacred in the national calendar. It is a national holiday, when the tri-colour floats from every public building, and from many a private dwelling-house, and when patriotic speeches ring from the Alps to Sicily throughout the length and breadth of the land.

But Christendom can never afford to forget that at no time, and in no land, has a dethroned Pope ever abandoned his preposterous claims to be King of kings and Lord of lords, the superior of all earthly sovereigns and princes, and as having therefore a divine right to tyrannise over the souls and the bodies of men; and that in keeping with this insolence and blasphemy, the very day that has seen him anywhere cease to be a potentate has seen him become a plotter, the very day that has seen the Church cease to be a Political Power has seen it become a Political Conspiracy.

It was so in England. Up till 1533 the Pope treated England as a province of his See, summoning Henry VIII. to appear by person or by proxy in Rome to answer for contumacy; and when the King treated his citation with the contempt it deserved, he launched against him his thunderbolt of excommunication, declaring that he had forfeited his throne and the allegiance of his subjects, and calling upon those subjects to rebel against him.

King Henry and his Parliament replied by the Statute of Supremacy, declaring the King to be henceforth the Head of Church and State, and that neither Pope nor Priest had any jurisdiction within the realm of England. The Roman Catholic Church thus ceasing to be a Political Power in the land, instantly became a Political Conspiracy, and it was not long before the Treason Act had to be passed to deal with rebel bishops and priests, monks and nuns, and their dupes and accomplices. The Pope became the plotter, and the plotter the assassin, his Holiness, Paul III., intriguing and arranging for the murder of King Henry and for the invasion of England, and promising Indulgences and other favours to any who would kill the English heretic.

In the time of Queen Elizabeth, Pope and Church continued their treasonable conspiracies on the same lines. In 1570, Pope Pius v. deposed her, and instigated the Ridolfi conspiracy for a Spanish invasion, having as his chief accomplice the Duke of Norfolk, who applied for and received a dispensation to pretend he was a Protestant, the better to further the infamous design. In 1584, Pope Gregory XIII., like so many of his predecessors and successors, took up the assassin's knife, promising riches here and heaven hereafter to any one who would make away with the heretical Queen. And to come down to present times and to everyday occurrences, the utterances of many members of the Roman Catholic hierarchy and priesthood in

Britain, and of not a few of the Irish Nationalists, seem to show that rebellion is still a part of their creed, and that Popery and Patriotism are wide as the poles asunder. One has only to glance at the condition of Ireland to see overwhelming proof of the fact that just as surely as *Protestantism* and *Loyalty* march hand in hand, so *Roman Catholicism* and *Disloyalty* are indissolubly connected.

Speaking of the Chinese massacres of 1900, Lord Salisbury said: "Have you observed that all the people slaughtered are Christians? Do you imagine that they are slaughtered simply because the Chinese dislike their religion? There is no nation in the world so indifferent on the subject of religion as the Chinese. It is because they, and other nations, have got the idea that missionary work is a mere instrument of the secular Government, in order to achieve the objects it has in view." That his words are applicable only to Roman Catholic missionaries is proved by such facts as the Rev. W. O. Ellerich of Chefoo records. He says: "Historically considered, I regard the Roman Catholic missions and their propaganda as one of the main causes for the disturbed condition of the country. It is an axiom that wherever Roman Catholics are found in China, there, sooner or later, disturbances are sure to arise. The only parts of this province which have been exempt from disturbances are those sections where there are no Roman Catholics." Sir Rutherford Alcock, on his

way to China as a representative of England, saw the Pope, and to the question put to him by Leo XIII., "Why is it that Roman Catholic priests are hated by the Chinese?" he replied, "It is because of their assumption of political power."

But it is in Italy, with its capital still unhappily the seat and shrine of the Pope, that the character of the Roman Catholic Church as a Political Conspiracy is most patent and pronounced. Here it proclaims itself unblushingly as the uncompromising enemy of the State, and it is recognised as such, and it is dealt with as such. Signor Crispi, in *The New Review* for May 1892, wrote: "To be a sincere Catholic, and a friend of Italy, is, to the Italians, a contradiction."

The Pope, as I had occasion to show when speaking of his true position, arrogates to himself the title of "King," denying it to the lawful Sovereign of Italy, whom, as I have already said, he disparagingly calls the "King of Sardinia," and the "Head of the House of Savoy," or indirectly, through his offensive organs in England and in other lands, the "Wolf of Savoy." In harmony with this claim, he is perpetually calling out against the spoliation of the Church, and conspiring by seditious means for the restoration of the temporal power, and he says he is convinced that Providence will, before his death, work a miracle to enable him to regain it. In this connection we may recall what Lord Clarendon once said,

"Providence hath wrought many miracles during these past years, but they have all been on the side of Italy," and what King Humbert said on the twenty-fifth anniversary of the overthrow of the temporal power, "God willed the unity of Italy, in order that it might be prosperous and great."

And the Pope backs up his claims by deeds. The great palace of the Vatican, so generously, as we have seen, made over to him for life by the first Italian Parliament, and made over to him so completely (though what one Parliament did, another can undo) that Italian law and Italian police cannot enter it, is literally the headquarters of a nefarious conspiracy that has ramifications in every quarter of the land. There, Pope, cardinals, canons, and prelates of every grade, intrigue and plot against the unity and independence of Italy, and against everything that makes for its prosperity and happiness. The priests, scattered everywhere, in every city and town, in every country village and mountain hamlet, act as the instruments of their designs, under the captaincy of their archbishops and bishops, men who still, we may say, carry the sword as well as the pastoral staff, and always "the pastoral staff in the wrong hand." Almost all the priests serve their leaders willingly and even eagerly, but a few honourably resent the degradation. These, no matter to what grade they may belong, are, sooner or later, infallibly punished

by the Curia. The late Hon. Ruggero Bonghi, a distinguished writer and member of Parliament, but strange to say a clerical, in an article in the *Nuova Antologia* of January 1894, wrote: "The war is conducted by the Papacy, and since its commencement twenty-three years ago, it does not seem to decrease in vigour and in precision of aim; on the contrary, it even increases, being guided to-day by a Pope of an elevated mind, but in the highest degree political. The Pope continues to fight fiercely to recover the temporal power. Throughout the country the priests either follow the Pope, or remain inactive and silent, even when in their hearts they dissent from him." Signor Crispi, in the article in *The New Review* from which I have already quoted, said: "To-day he (the Pope) conspires; to-morrow as king he would treat openly with our enemies to the detriment of our national unity."

Let me now give a few examples to show how this conspiracy is carried on.

Anarchy and insurrection, disaffection and disloyalty are diligently fanned and fomented. Just as before the union of Italy, brigands were, as we have seen, feasted and fêted, and sent merrily away to rob and murder with the Pope's absolution and benediction, so now anarchists and revolutionaries, and the disaffected and the disloyal of every class, who are willing to disturb the peace of Italy, and give trouble to the Government and the local

authorities, are sure of Vatican sympathy and help. In proof of this, I may refer to the insurrection that took place in Sicily in 1894 amongst the sulphur workers. As was afterwards proved in a court of justice, the priests and monks were largely responsible for that outbreak, by kindling a spirit of rebellion, through the use of inflammatory speeches, against the Government as the author of the hardships of these poor labourers; by inciting them to resist the police and military sent to restore order; and by supplying them with funds from the monasteries and nunneries for the purchase of arms and ammunition. Signor Crispi, it was reported, intercepted cheques that arrived for the ringleaders of the rebellion from Marseilles, which had been sent to them in that roundabout way by the *Vatican*.

Calm was hardly restored in Sicily when fresh disturbances broke out amongst the quarrymen of Carrara, and here again a large share of responsibility was clearly brought home to the Church, which had used the same seditious instruments it had put into force in Sicily. Lastly, there were the so-called "Bread Riots" that took place at Milan in 1898, which only formed part of a very widely operative plot to upset throne and constitution, and in this case, as in the former, the chief conspirator was the Church. In speaking of "The Pope" in Chapter II., I referred to these riots, and to an incriminating postcard produced in court, of which some seventy thousand were printed at the

Papal press, and put into circulation by the priests. This postcard was only one of ten documents discovered that fixed the guilt of the riots, and of the suffering and bloodshed that accompanied them, on the Vatican and its agents.

Such revolutionary tactics can only occasionally be employed by the Church, but before passing from them to speak of others in more frequent use, I would refer in a sentence or two to the assassination of the late lamented King Humbert. No one directly lays that deed at the door of the Vatican, but the priestly apologists for the murderer Bresci, and for his crime, who are now, or were lately, expiating their treasonable utterances in prison, are very numerous, and nothing is more to the point than the following words, used by the *Globe* of London, on 30th July 1900, the day after the assassination, in a leading article on the sad occurrence: "So long as the Vatican persists in its anti-national attitude in the vain hope of re-establishing the temporal power of the Pope, so long will fools and fanatics be provided with fearfully potent reasons for sedition and worse."

A Roman Catholic Jesuit writer is reported to have said: "We have lost the bayonets which held Italy back. Let us encourage the revolution, the tumults, the discontent, the red ruin, Socialism, Anarchism, anything which may tear Italy asunder. When the Monarchy of Savoy lies in terror and despair at the feet of the Communist and the in-

cendiary, the House of Savoy will be glad to buy at the price of the temporal power the assistance of the legions of the Papacy!"

Measures of sedition less outrageous than these I have mentioned, though perhaps hardly less effective in securing the objects of the Church, on account of their being in more constant use, are the following. Priests in private conversation and in their public utterances decry the King, the Government, and all in authority. They are commanded to lose no opportunity when they can with safety do this. Hence the newspapers often accuse them of preaching from their pulpits "not the Gospel of Jesus Christ, but hatred of their King and of their country." Priests are also instructed by their episcopal guides how to misrepresent Parliamentary measures, so as to prejudice the minds of the people against their rulers, and impede useful legislation. As I have said, a "Divorce Bill" and a "Bill to inquire into Paternity" in the case of illegitimacy, are now before the country. Both Bills are intended to introduce reforms urgently needed in the interests of morality, but the Church is bitterly opposing the measures, telling the more ignorant married couples that they will be compelled to separate if the Bill becomes law, and telling all from their pulpits that unless they sign petitions against it, which petitions ready prepared lie open on tables in the churches, they will go to the *inferno*. "Rural Banks," "Workmen and

Labourers' Unions," and "Catholic Democratic Societies," planted in advantageous centres throughout the country, have a political scope analogous to that which the Nationalists and priests have in their operations amongst the peasants in Ireland.

In speaking of "The Pope," I referred (p. 65) to the fact that the Vatican takes pains to learn of the arrival in Rome of Protestant travellers of wealth and social position, in order to bring them into contact with the Pontiff. One of the means adopted is to have agents resident in, or frequenting, the best hotels, for the examination of the lists of travellers. Those it deems desirable to know are not only introduced to the Pope, but are given tickets for great ceremonies at St. Peter's, and have young priests assigned them to teach them Italian and to act as guides to them in Rome. All this attention has a political bearing. Once the confidence of these travellers is gained, these agents make use of their position to insinuate all kinds of evil things against the King, the royal House of Savoy, and all in authority. These they represent as being in disfavour, whilst they extol the Pope as the popular idol, to whose allegiance the people, ground down by taxation, would gladly return.

I am often amazed at the cleverness of the Church in picking out the travellers it is desirable to influence. A young Scottish lady happened jocularly to remark to an English Roman Catholic nobleman

that she was going to Italy and would like to see the Pope. She had hardly got settled in her hotel in Rome, when a monsignor from the Vatican called upon her to conduct her to a private audience. In her case, as in that of others I have known, no evil resulted, but too frequently I meet those who have come under the Papal glamour, and whose sympathies have been given to the Church, and to the ragged picturesqueness of a Papal-bound Italy of the past; and occasionally I hear of those who have gone over, "lured into the Romanist Church," as Mr. Ruskin says, "by the glitter of it, like larks into a trap by broken glass, stitched into a new creed by gold threads on priests' petticoats," than which, he goes on to say, he "knows nothing in the shape of error so dark, no imbecility so absolute, no treachery so contemptible." Lord Byron in *Childe Harold* speaks of

"A dome, where flaunts she in such glorious sheen,
That men forget the blood which she hath spilt,
And bow the knee to pomp that loves to garnish guilt."

The press, too, is largely used by the Church to damage the country. The Vatican subsidises not only its own organs in Italy and out of it, but newspapers and magazines everywhere that will take up an anti-Italian attitude. Through these channels false information in regard to the social, economic, and political conditions of the country is widely disseminated. Indeed, so many and varied and persistent are the intrigues and plottings of this

huge clerical conspiracy, that one is often reminded of what the old Doge of Venice, Leonardo Donato, told the Papal Nuncio, who remonstrated with him in the name of Pope Paul v. for having imprisoned certain seditious priests, "Go back to Rome and tell your master that there is never a deed of shame done in any part of the Republic but some worthless priest is at the bottom of it."

In view of such a campaign of conspiracy, threatening the very life of young Italy, one may marvel how it is that it not only lives but flourishes, making steady progress in everything that contributes to a healthy national life. The explanation of this is that it does not allow the Church, as we allow it in England, a free hand. The famous phrase, "*Libera Chiesa in Libero Stato*," attributed to Cavour, but which was really invented by the Comte de Montalembert, the French Jesuit, Italy found was a delusion when the Church to be dealt with was a Roman Catholic one. It soon learned that a Free Roman Catholic Church in a Free State meant a Church free to damage and destroy that State. Hence the Church in Italy has had to be tied down by penal statutes, by "Disabilities Acts," such as England with foolish magnanimity has erased from its statute books. These Acts are not so stern as those the King of Siam would adopt. This King was driving one day with King Humbert in one of the principal streets of Rome, when a college of priests and their students passed, none of whom took off

their hats. Noticing this, he asked for an explanation. King Humbert referred him to his aide-de-camp, General Appellius, who informed him of the hostility the Church bore the State. The King of Siam listened with astonishment, and then broke out : " But have you not here in Rome gibbets on which to hang them all? If they were in my country, I would soon clear them out. And it is said the Pope wants to recommend to my care his missionaries ! "

The Government of Italy, whilst allowing the Church great liberty, has, however, at last had to pass laws which shut priests out of all civil spheres, and which check them in all attempts to terrorise the people with their spiritual arms.

For example, priest-teachers have been banished from all the public schools, and their places have been filled by certificated laymen. This was done because it was found that the priests turned out their finished scholars ignorant of everything useful, and with hatred to their country rankling in their breasts, exactly as they do to-day in the Government schools of Ireland. Priest-theological professors in the universities were found teaching the treasonable as well as immoral theology of St. Alfonso de Liguori, thus corrupting the students, and they and their chairs were abolished. Priest-chaplains in the army and navy were found tampering with the loyalty of the soldiers and sailors of the King, and they and their offices went, like the university theological

faculties. Priests were seeking to influence and control elections by the exercise of spiritual terrorism, as they are freely permitted to do in Ireland ; and by the use of the same weapons they gave annoyance to Italians who bought confiscated Church property, or who sent their children to Protestant schools and institutions, or who would not leave legacies to the Church, or have priests attend them. To put a stop to all such abuses, there was promulgated, in January 1890, the famous "New Penal Code," the work of the present Premier, Signor Zanardelli. This Code "threatens severe, but just, punishments to those priests who shall abuse their office to the damage of the nation and its free institutions." Clause 173 runs thus : "Any minister who, in the exercise of his priestly offices, censures and abuses the institutions and laws of the State, or the enactments of the authorities, renders himself liable to fine and imprisonment." Clause 174 says : "A priest who, abusing the moral power derived from his office, incites to the setting aside of the institutions and laws of the State ; or in any other way to the neglect of duties due to the country, or inherent in a public office ; or who damages legitimate private interests, and disturbs the peace of families, renders himself liable to fine, imprisonment, and temporary or perpetual suspension from office, or from the endowments of his office."

These enactments will perhaps be better understood if I give a few instances of their application.

Curiously enough, one of the first priests to feel their weight was the parish priest of their author, Signor Zanardelli. Zanardelli represents Brescia in Parliament, and when an election came round this priest vigorously denounced the member from the pulpit, and threatened to withhold the so-called privileges of the Church from any who should vote for him. At the close of the service the police were informed of his words. They then communicated with the priest, and said that he had been reported to them as using language calculated to terrorise the people; but, as they were unwilling to bring the law to bear upon him without warning, they would overlook the offence for this once, but if it were repeated he would have to take the consequences. Next Sunday the priest again used the same language, when he was instantly apprehended, tried by jury, and sentenced to pay a fine of 500 francs (£20), to suffer two months' imprisonment, and to be debarred for five years from exercising the office of the priesthood.

Again, Italian parents set a high value on Protestant schools (which, of course, are licensed by the State) and often send their children to them. In such cases priests sometimes call upon the parents of these children and threaten them with spiritual pains and penalties if they do not withdraw them. The fathers as a rule are quite indifferent to such things, but the mothers become frightened, and urge their husbands to yield. This is called in the Act

“disturbing the peace of families,” and the father has but to lodge a complaint with the authorities, when the priest has either to desist his annoyances or suffer the penalty. Under the clause of the penal statute, “damaging legitimate private interests,” falls any attempt made by a priest to get hold of a dying man’s money or estate. As everybody knows, priests have been notorious at all times and in all lands for thus impoverishing the people, and enriching themselves, to the great damage of the State. In Italy the evil has been stamped out.

I knew a case of a peasant in a Riviera village being induced by a priest to leave his money to the Church. His sons returned from America and took the priest to court, the will was set aside, they received the whole inheritance, and the priest was sent into penal servitude. I cannot help mentioning in this connection an almost analogous case which happened in Ireland, with, however, very different results. On the death of their father two sons returned from abroad. They found that a priest had, when visiting their dying parent, taken a lawyer with him, who then and there drew out a will in favour of the Church, setting aside one already existing in their favour. They took the priest to court, but lost their case; they then appealed against the decision, but lost again, and had the expenses of both trials to pay. Indeed, a Dublin banker told me quite recently that so great is the spiritual and physical terrorism and constraint exercised by the

priests at the death-beds of Irish people of means, that as a rule such persons do not make wills at all. They prefer to die intestate, and allow the Government to make the division of their estates. That is found to be the only way to keep those brigands of priests from enriching themselves at the expense of the lawful heirs. Mr. McCarthy, in the Introduction to his book, *Priests and People in Ireland*, says that one of the main objects to the achievement of which the concentrated energies of the forces of the priests in Ireland are directed is, "terrifying the enfeebled minds of the credulous, the invalid, and the aged, with the result that the savings of penurious thrift, the inheritance of parental industry, the competence of respectability, are all alike captured in their turn from expectant next-of-kin, and garnered into the sacerdotal treasury." Ireland badly wants a "New Penal Code."

Another measure which has, to a very large extent, weakened the Papal Church in Italy as a Political Conspiracy I desire to mention, and that is the "*Legge delle Opere Pie*" (Pious Works Bill). Italy is a country rich in charity funds, for throughout long centuries people had been in the habit of leaving money for the poor in order to save their own souls. All these moneys were in the hands of the Church, which unscrupulously used them so as to advance its own political ends. In July 1890, six months after the passing of the "New Penal Code,"

the "Pious Works Bill" became law, by which these funds passed out of the hands of the Church into those of the State. They now yield an annual income of some five and a half million pounds sterling, which the State administers by means of local boards and committees, on which it is illegal for a priest to have a seat, for the relief of real poverty, the building and sustenance of hospitals and orphanages, and the carrying out of many other works of charity.

It is by means, then, of laws like these that Italy holds in check this rebel Church, that Italy foils this gigantic ecclesiastical conspiracy. It is by such laws that Zanardelli, the Premier, answers his own question, "*Si deve vedere se in Italia comanda il Quirinale o il Vaticano?*" (It is to be seen who rules in Italy, the Quirinal or the Vatican?) It would be better, a thousand times better, to get rid of the Church altogether; but until that becomes possible there is nothing more to be done. At the same time, in pursuing a treasonable political career, the Church is destroying itself. As Signor Crispi once said: "The Church of Rome will cease to be universal if she continues to confound religion with politics. The people, disturbed in their consciences, will feel their need of a National Church, in whose bosom Patriotism and God can agree."

In closing this chapter, let me say that Italy, in thus regarding the Roman Catholic Church in the light of a Political Conspiracy, and in safeguarding

the country against its intrigues and machinations, reads England a lesson; for England, obstinately and foolishly shutting her eyes to this aspect of the Papal Church, and persisting in regarding it only from the standpoint of religion, allows men to sit in her Houses of Legislature, and to act as her Ambassadors at Foreign Courts and her Representatives in her Dependencies, who "avow an allegiance to an alien and hostile Power," and, forgetful of the fact "that you cannot tolerate those who will not tolerate you, and who are constantly trying to cut your throat," she not only tolerates such, but regards them with favour and indulgence. The results are that her interests abroad are betrayed, and her Protestant subjects at home, as happens every day throughout Ireland, and too frequently in London, Liverpool, and other great centres of Christian work, are terrorised and persecuted, and when redress is sought in court are mocked by a miscarriage of justice. I often feel and often say that Italy, and not England, is the true Protestant country; that Italy, and not England, is the land where one enjoys the fullest religious liberty.

VII

Confession

The Deification of Sin

ON July 14, 1901, the *Asino*, a daily newspaper published in Rome, printed in its columns, and also in the form of large bills, which it caused to be posted up in public places in the chief cities of Italy, the following challenge: "The *Asino* offers one thousand francs to the Roman Catholic newspaper, *Il Domani d'Italia* of Rome, to the *Cittadino* of Mantua, or to any other paper of the Church which has the courage to publish the Latin text, with an Italian translation, of the passage on page 767 of vol. v. of the *Moral Philosophy* of Saint Alfonso Maria de Liguori (ed. 2, Ratisbon; approved by Leo XIII., 1879-81), beginning with the words, '*Confessarius non est denunciandus*,' to the words, '*aut ad tactus tantum venialiter inhonestas*'; also the passage on page 298 of vol. vi., beginning, '*an semper sit mortale*,' to the words, '*in os uxoris*.'" The challenge was never taken up, and, we may safely prophesy, never will be taken

up. Let us now ask why it was made, and why the Church is afraid to publish the passages named?

I have already spoken of St. Alfonso Maria de Liguori in Chapter IV. (p. 99), when proving the Papal Church to be "The Antithesis of Christianity." He lived from the beginning till near the end of the eighteenth century. He wrote several books, but his most famous was his *Theologia Moralis* (Moral Theology). As I have said, the express object of this book is to make religion easy, to make the profession of Roman Catholicism not inconsistent with fallen human nature, to make it compatible, indeed, with a life of sin; and in proof of this I referred to his teaching that Roman Catholics (not heretics) may in certain circumstances break any Divine command with impunity, and that in any case for them all *mortal* sins can be made *venial*, and really too trifling to be mentioned. Then a large part of the book is taken up with the marriage relation and with the intercourse of the sexes. And in dealing with this subject his descriptions and insinuations and suggestions and questions are so obscene that any one daring to publish them would certainly be prosecuted for outraging public decency.

In 1894, Professor Grassman, a German, published a translation of it in German, at Stettin. He was immediately apprehended, and although his translation was proved in court to be in every

particular absolutely correct, he was condemned. In the same way an Italian translation of the book was published by the *Società Editrice Lombarda* in 1900, and was instantly sequestered by the Government, under an article in the Italian Penal Code that deals with offences against public morality. Even an edition in Latin that it was proposed to publish in Rome was forbidden, under the same statute, by the *Procuratore del Re*. I believe that more than once an attempt has been made in England to give the public, by extracts from Liguori, some idea of what the confessional is, but every attempt was followed by prosecution. The character of the book thus prevented the challenge of the *Asino* from being taken up.

But knowing this, why was it made? It was made to expose the evils of the subject now under consideration—the evils of *Confession*. For this book of Liguori is the standard work of the Church on that subject. It is the text-book used in the training of priests as father-confessors. No one is qualified to hear confession whose mind is not saturated with its teaching. The questions set forth in this book are those the priest puts to his penitents, and the instructions in this book are those he follows in dealing with them.

And the extraordinary pre-eminence given to this work is due to the fact that the Church has set its seal of approval on it, and on its author, Liguori, in a way altogether exceptional. Pope

after Pope has blessed him and his writings, and all but commanded the universal use by the priests and by the faithful of his *Moral Theology*. A few years after his death Pope Pius vi. approved of his works, and raised him to the rank of "Venerable." In 1816, Pius vii. confirmed a decree by the Congregation of Rites, which declared that in none of his writings was there anything meriting censure, and that the Congregation unanimously approved of his system of morality; and accordingly the Pope beatified him. In 1839, Gregory xvi. once more set the Papal seal of commendation on his works, and canonised him. Then Pius the Ninth, in March 1871, in answer, as he said, to the request "of almost all the bishops of the world," declared him a "Doctor of the Church," that is, declared him to be one of the few, amongst whom are St. Augustine and Gregory the Great, who not only communicated to others the teaching of the Church, but who taught the Church itself.

Further, Pope Pius the Ninth, in his Apostolic Letter of July 7, 1871, said: "We will and decree that the books of this Doctor, and his commentaries and pamphlets, and in fact all his works, shall be cited, taught, and, if need be, imposed, not only in private, but publicly, in schools, academies, lyceums, colleges, lectures, discussions, explanations, discourses, sermons, and in all other ecclesiastical studies and Christian exercises." Lastly, the present Pope, Leo xiii., goes if possible beyond his pre-

decessor in commending Liguori's works, for on August 28, 1879, he wrote: "Although the books of the Holy Doctor, Alfonso Maria de Liguori, our beloved son, have already run throughout the whole world, not without the greatest enrichment of Christianity, it is desirable that these works and others shall be still further circulated and put into the hands of all. . . ." Thus every Pope without exception since the death of Liguori has honoured his memory, and approved and commended his writings, and practically commanded their use, and it is this fact that gives them a degree of authority in the Church that the writings of no others possess. It must then be apparent to every one that the use of such a book, bearing the seal of approval of so many Popes, must greatly aggravate all the perils and evils of the "sacrament of confession."

These evils we may briefly touch on, but they are incalculable. Every one knows that, just as surely as one cannot touch pitch and not be defiled, just as surely as the dyer's hand takes the stain of the colour he is using, so surely the mind is affected by the nature of the subjects that occupy its thoughts and that form the topics of conversation. In the Confession the subjects thought of and talked of are, as we have seen, such as cannot be made public, such as it is a shame to speak of, such as Paul in the fifth chapter of his Epistle to the Ephesians says ought "not to be once named among you as becometh saints."

Paul said to his Roman converts (Rom. xvi. 19), "I would have you wise unto that which is good, and simple concerning evil." Confessor and confessed put good far from them, and mutually instruct each other in evil, becoming simple concerning good and wise concerning evil, as, hand in hand, they go exploring the unclean "depths of Satan." Then, again, we know that the more frequently evil deeds are spoken of, the less evil do they become in the speaker's eyes. By familiarity with them their wickedness ceases to be seen or felt. As the Rev. C. Neil, of Poplar, London, in his booklet on *The Fallacy of Sacramental Confession*, says: "Auricular confession is in effect a moral anodyne, such as morphia or chlorodyne, which soothes, lulls, and pacifies, while at the same time it undermines both the body and soul by habitual use." Sin thus ceases to be "exceeding sinful"; not only so, but it ceases almost to appear sin at all, and this must be especially the case when the teaching of Liguori on the subject is accepted, who, as we have seen, not only makes light of every kind of sin, but actually justifies in certain circumstances its committal.

Again, the granting of absolution on easy terms incites to the repetition of the evil. The three processes of Sin, Confession, and Absolution have a tendency to repeat themselves, and their recurrence to become more frequent. Italians go a step farther, however, and say that absolution follows confession in order that the penitent may sin again. They say that the

very principle of confession is to clear off one set of sins that a fresh set may be undertaken. They compare it to "a merchant's monthly clearance, leaving the desk empty for another set of accommodation bills, to be cleared out in turn when the next month is done." Desanctis says, in his book on *Confession*: "Rome is the city which surpasses all other cities of Italy in immorality; drunkenness, murder, theft, fraud, adultery, are crimes incessantly committed; but whoever commits them confesses and believes himself absolved, and immorality is not only not arrested, but by the facility of pardon, at the cost of a few prayers, is committed again without scruple." A husband, talking of Church matters to his wife, said, "In short, my dear, these hypocrites of priests disgust me, and you must never go to confession." "But," she answered naïvely, "if I am not assured of absolution, how can I sin without remorse?"

And what is the outcome of all this so far as confessor and confessed are concerned? That must be apparent to every one, and may be summed up in one word—*demoralisation*. Confession demoralises confessor and confessed. *It demoralises the confessor*. It is difficult to see how the very training for the hearing of confessions by the study of the *Moral Theology* of Liguori, and such like writers, does not debase the mind. On this point Father Chiniquy asks: "Has not the Pope's celibate, by studying his books before he goes to the confessional-

box, corrupted his own heart, and plunged his mind, memory, and soul into an atmosphere of impurity?" I believe he has, and that the vast majority of father-confessors enter upon their duties with an impaired and blunted moral sense. And then the discharge of these duties, the listening to deeds of shame and the talking of them, surely and swiftly complete the ruin begun. The confessor falls. He becomes the accomplice in sin of his penitent. Liguori takes account of this, and openly declares that "*i preti più virtuosi sono costretti a cadervi almeno una volta al mese*" (the most virtuous priests are constrained to fall at least once a month). If that is permitted to the "most virtuous," what of the others? "If they do these things in a green tree, what shall be done in the dry?" It is easy to imagine this, but we had better take, in as brief compass as possible, the testimony of those who are best qualified to speak on the subject—priests themselves.

Father Chiniquy, who was for over a quarter a century a confessor, says: "I have heard the confessions of more than two hundred priests, and to say the truth, as God knows it, I must declare that only twenty-one had not to weep over the secret or public sins committed through the irresistibly corrupting influences of auricular confession." "I am now," he continues, "seventy-six years old, and in a short time I shall be in my grave. I shall have to give an account of what I now say. Well, it is in

the presence of my great Judge, with my tomb before my eyes, that I declare to the world that very few—yes, very few—priests escape from falling into the pit of the most horrible depravity the world has ever known through the confession of females.” In another passage he compares these few to trees that one sometimes sees standing erect in an American forest that has been swept by fire. The number of these “spared trees,” according to Father Hyacinthe, is one in a hundred. As Father Chiniquy says: “The confessional-box is, for the greatest part of the confessors and female penitents, a real pit of perdition, into which they promiscuously fall and perish. . . . It is generally nothing but a bottomless pit of infamy and perdition for both.”

There are few women who do not at first rebel against the objectionable and suggestive questions put to them by the priest. Feelings of shame and indignation possess them. Count Campello has told me that he has often seen ladies in St. Peter’s faint in the confessional-box under the priest’s questionings. But that did not exempt them from the ordeal. Once they were brought round, the priest just began where he left off, and, exercising tact and caution, unflinchingly held on his way. After a time Count Campello has seen these same ladies, so far from resisting these questions, actually finding a morbid pleasure in having them put to them, confessor and confessed looking upon the whole thing as a “*buono divertimento*.” Padre Chiniquy gives the very same

testimony. In 1560 the Senate of Venice forbade the Jesuits to confess women, because they made use of confession for purposes of immorality.

This assault upon the "Town of Mansoul" is recognised by St. Liguori as a real strategic operation, and he gives rules so as to secure success. Sometimes, however, in spite of all efforts, the priest fails. A lady told me that it was twenty-five years since she had confessed, and that she would never confess again. She refused to answer the priest's questions, saying, "If I had done these things, I should tell you, without your asking me." He insisted, but she stood firm. Then he denounced her as "a disobedient daughter of the Church," to which she replied, "No, it is you who are a wicked priest." He then refused her absolution. She asked, "Is that your last word to me?" He replied that it was. "Then," she said, "I have spoken my last word to you;" when she rose, never again to degrade herself by kneeling in a confessional-box.

Most disastrous is the effect of confession upon the young. Many boys and girls are first made to eat of the tree of the knowledge of evil in the confessional. Two Italian men have told me personally that as boys they could not even understand what their father-confessor meant, and that it was he who first of all put unholy ideas into their minds. Father Chiniquy bears the same testimony in regard to himself. When a boy of nine at his first confession, he says, "my confessor dragged my thoughts

into regions of iniquity which, thanks be to God, had hitherto been quite unknown to me," and he tells us that at last, in an agony of despair, he cried out in the church, "Please don't ask me any more of these questions, which teach me more wickedness than I ever knew." In this connection the question of the Rev. C. Neil is pertinent: "For every young person guarded from outward uncleanness by the use of the confessional, how many have been forever injured by revelations in iniquity before unknown?" Thus in the confessional all the natural freshness and innocence of the youthful heart and mind are destroyed, and, in a very emphatic sense, and in the case of very many, "every imagination of the thoughts of the heart" becomes "only evil continually."

Much has been said of the secrecy of confession, but we must never forget that secrecy is strictly limited by the interests of the Church, and of Governments who extend to the Church their protection. The confessional has always been used, and is, I believe, used to-day, wherever available, to serve political ends. It was so in Venice under Austria. During that unhappy domination no one could hold a civil post who did not go to confession at least once a year, at Easter, and all were more or less forced to confess. If they did not, they fell under suspicion. Of these confessions registers were kept which were sent to the Government at Vienna. Copies of these registers, I am told, were found in the sacristies of

the churches when the Austrians were driven out of Venice by Manin in 1848-49, and also when they had to go out in 1866, after the Peace of Prague. Pressensé showed lately in the French Chamber how the secrecy of the confession was violated, by Father Dulac, in the case of Colonel Picquart. It has often been rumoured, and on good foundation, that the secrets of European Cabinets, not excluding that of England, have been known in the Vatican.

As in the confessional-box the penitent is, as a rule, the dupe of the priest, it is a satisfaction to learn that sometimes the tables are turned, and the priest is the dupe. It was so frequently in Venice, when under Austria. A gentleman, who held a high post in the Customs Offices, told me that he never debased himself by confessing, nor did any in his offices, although, as I have said, confession was compulsory upon all holding Government positions. How he effected this was as follows :—The priest to whom confession was made gave to the penitent a ticket which certified that he had confessed. There were thirty parishes in Venice, and hundreds of confessing priests. There was a class of men, for the most part clerks out of work, and porters, who discharged ship cargoes, or assisted at the customs examination of goods, who took to the business of confession at Easter. They would go from parish to parish, and confess in every one of them, and get as many certificates. These they sold to those unwilling themselves to confess. My friend said

to me, "I always bought my certificate of confession, and so did all self-respecting men in Venice."

After our consideration of this subject, we may well ask if it never serves any other purpose than those of the demoralisation of youth and women, and the betrayal of men? It might serve some other purpose, but I do not believe it ever does. The Archbishop of Canterbury, speaking on this subject at Ashford, on October 12, 1898, after enumerating a number of its evils, said: "It is, of course, true that in spite of all these objections there are men and women who find real spiritual help in it. Sometimes a man is troubled with an uneasy feeling that all is not right with him, but he hardly knows in what the wrong consists. In such cases as these, the man is encouraged to come to God's minister to be told what to do." Yes, but we must first find a priest who has any sympathy with people in that state of mind.

An Italian professor of literature told me that when he was a youth he had a very tender conscience, and was often troubled with scruples about this thing and that. One morning he went to his father-confessor, and found the worthy priest busy amongst his birds, of which he had very many. He was giving a fly to this one, a worm to that, bread to a third, seed to a fourth, water to a fifth, and a general clean up to all. When my friend appeared, he said testily, "Well, what is it?" "I have come to confess, father." "Be quick,

then. Don't you see all the birds are waiting for me?" My friend knelt down, and began to tell him his conscientious difficulties. "Get up," said the priest, "and off with you, and don't trouble me with such rubbish. Prepare for me something better next time."

Happily, in Italy auricular confession, this pit of perdition and engine of Papal despotism, is practically at an end. Few women of intelligence and respectability ever go to it, and, I should think, no men. I, at least, have never seen a man kneel at the grated window of a confessional-box. If he must have, for any reason, a certificate of confession, he can buy it, and that direct from one priest or other, without the intervention of a third party.

An officer in the Italian army lately told me that after being married by the civil authority of the place, his bride and her family wished him to have also the religious ceremony. To this he was averse for many reasons, and one was the fact that this could not be had without confession. This he said he could not and would not submit to. So he went to the village priest and told him frankly what he wanted, and putting down a franc, said, "There, you take that, and give me a certificate of confession and absolution." The priest hesitated, and said he could not do it under five francs. The officer answered that he could afford no more, adding, "If you don't do it for that, then this business is at an end." The

priest thereupon took the franc, made out the certificate, and my friend and his bride received the Church's benediction on their union! I have been told by teachers that boys and girls who are pupils in certain schools where confession is insisted upon never take it seriously. It is for them only a piece of amusement, which, however, is morally and religiously very harmful to them.

What an extraordinary thing it is that in England respectable men, lay and clerical, should be found desirous of reintroducing into the Church this instrument of moral pollution and of political betrayal, auricular confession! And not less extraordinary is it that they should advocate the putting of demoralising confessional manuals into the hands of those willing to confess. Some time ago there appeared in the *Times* a letter by a lady signed "A Protestant, Thank God." In this letter she tells us how, wishing to peruse a Roman Catholic breviary or missal, she asked a young lady friend to lend her one. The book she gave her was entitled *The Daily Companion, with a complete Preparation, the Sacraments, and other useful additions*, published in Liverpool. One of the chapters of this book was entitled "Devotions for Confession," and from this she quotes questions which, she says, horrified her. I need not give these questions, for they are simply Liguori's, but this is how she summarises the teaching of the book: "Every crime for which Sodom and Gomorrah were burned, is here openly

alluded to; and this book is a Roman Catholic lady's daily companion!" The results accruing from the use of such a book in England cannot be different from what they are in Italy—the inflaming in the heart and mind of every corrupt passion, the demoralisation of confessor and confessed.

Again I say, what an extraordinary thing it is that men of unblemished reputation and of high social position should be found working for the introduction of auricular confession and of such confessional manuals into England! We must suppose that they have either ill-informed and weak minds, or are people of light hearts and lighter lives. It is over such that Popery casts its glamour—that "mystery of iniquity which worketh with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved; and for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie."

VIII

Monasticism

A National Peril

THE monastic system, though associated intimately with Christianity, is not the outcome of it. It existed long before Christian times in pagan and Jewish lands, and is associated with Brahmanism and Buddhism, with Mohammedanism, and, in the sect of the Essenes, with Judaism; and it has existed independently of any religion. Wherever found, and in whatever time, its rise has been more or less due to men and women seeking refuge from political turmoil, from the cares of secular life, from social luxury and extravagance, and from public looseness of morals; and also to a desire for quiet and leisure for study and contemplation, for the exercises of religion and charity, and for the peaceable pursuit of art, husbandry, and industries.

But while such innocent, or even commendable, reasons may explain the origin of monasticism, and while it is undeniable that many men and women have found in the system what they sought, and

that such have relieved the poor and nursed the sick, and helped on the commerce and civilisation and intellectual progress of their times, so that we owe to them the preservation of much that is invaluable in art and literature, still the tendency of the monastic system everywhere has always been downwards towards degeneracy and decay.

Indeed, the very evils it was designed to counteract—idleness, luxury, infidelity, and corruption—it has been ever found eventually to foster. Theoretically it has been one thing, practically it has been the very opposite. So much has this been the case, that in every nation where monasteries and nunneries have existed, they have become its plague-spots, sheltering, behind cloistered walls, under the garb of piety and self-sacrifice, hypocrites and impostors, profligates and rebels.

Such plague-spots were the monastic establishments on the Continent at the end of the fifteenth and beginning of the sixteenth centuries. We can learn much about them from the writings and letters of Erasmus, the scholar and “apostle of common sense,” as he has been called—he who “laid the egg that Luther hatched,” although, as Erasmus used to say, he laid a hen egg, but Luther hatched a game cock. Erasmus could speak from experience, for he was forced to enter an Augustinian monastery, against his will, before he was out of his teens. He records that within the walls of these places there was no intellect, no learning, no study, no religion, no morality ; only

ignorance, coarse pleasures, drunkenness, and evil discourse. As Mr. Froude tells us : " He (Erasmus) found that he might get drunk as often and as openly as he pleased, but study was a forbidden indulgence. Part of a monk's duties was to read aloud in the refectory some edifying story. It would be begun and ended in the usual way ; in the intervals the reader would introduce licentious anecdotes. Others would baptize and hear confessions when they were under the influence of drink." Worse still, he tells us that many monasteries and nunneries were nothing else but *lupanaria*.

Erasmus died in 1536, and it was in that very year that a Royal Commission, appointed to inquire into the condition of monastic houses in England, laid its report upon the table of the House of Commons. The report bore an ominous name that warned all to expect nothing good and clean within its pages. It was called the *Black Book*. Unfortunately it has perished, destroyed, as were so many incriminating documents of a like character, by the Papal party, when they were in power in the time of Queen Mary. However, its contents can be gathered from the despatches of the Commission, from the indignation its revelations, which shocked the moral sense of England, roused in the country, and from the preamble of the first Act of Dissolution, which was passed that same year for the suppression of the smaller monasteries, which were considered to be the worse. The preamble said :

“Forasmuch as manifest sin, vicious, carnal, and abominable living, is daily used and committed among the little and small abbeys, priories, and other religious houses of monks, canons, and nuns, . . . and albeit that many continual visitations hath been heretofore had by the space of two hundred years and more, for an honest and charitable reformation of such unthrifty, carnal, and abominable living; yet, nevertheless, little or none amendment is hitherto had, but their vicious living shamelessly increaseth and augmenteth, and by a cursed custom is rooted and infested. . . . Whereupon the Lords and Commons, by a great deliberation, finally be resolved that it is and shall be much more to the pleasure of Almighty God, and for the honour of this His realm, that the possessions of such spiritual houses, now spent and spoiled, and wasted for increase and maintenance of sin, should be converted to better uses, and the unthrifty religious persons so spending the same be compelled to reform their lives” (Froude’s *History of England*, vol. ii. p. 338).

The larger monasteries and nunneries had their term of probation extended, but by this first Act of Dissolution the axe was laid to their root, and they were warned that if they did not repent, and bring forth good fruit, they would be cut down. Other two years went by, and as there was no amendment and no prospect of it, as their fruit was only evil and that continually, by the second Act of Dissolution, passed in 1539, the whole monastic system was swept away.

The example thus set by England in grappling with the national peril of monasticism has been imitated, more or less perfectly, by most of the European Powers, with this tremendous difference, that whilst England has now turned its back on its own wise legislation, these Powers are putting theirs into force ; and never were these requirements more vigorously enforced than at this present time.

In Austria no monastic institution can exist without the sanction of the Minister of Public Worship, whose sanction has also to be obtained before any property can be inherited, and to him must be sent yearly returns of membership and revenue. All such institutions are open at all times to police inspection, and must be visited in any case periodically.

In Belgium similar regulations hold, besides which each establishment is bound to have a public hospital for the care of the sick.

In some of the cantons of Switzerland monastic institutions have been abolished altogether, and in others, State regulations, similar to those above noted, are in force.

A few years ago the Dreyfus affair awoke France, the " elder daughter of the Church," to the fact that the religious orders had her by the throat, and were fast strangling her, and the world knows the result. A life-and-death struggle ensued, and for the present she has escaped. Hundreds of monastic houses were dissolved, and monks and nuns fled in haste from French soil. No new society can be

formed without the sanction of Parliament and a decree of the Council of State, and when it is formed, it must render an account of its possessions, income, expenditure, and membership, when called upon to do so.

The monastic peril that threatened France, and the stern action she took to deliver herself from it, aroused several Continental nations to a sense of a kindred danger in their own midst, and to the necessity of adopting similar protective measures.

Thus in Spain, up to the year 1901, the Concordat of 1851 was in force. By that Concordat only three orders were permitted to establish themselves, that of St. Vincent de Paul, that of St. Philip Neri, and one not named. The unnamed order opened the door in course of time to the re-entrance of monks and nuns of all kinds and colours. Accordingly, Señor Moret brought in a Bill to modify the Concordat, and by a decree of the Minister of Justice all religious associations were called upon to register themselves within six months, under pain of being dissolved.

Portugal moved in the matter at the same time as Spain, and on April 18, 1901, the following decrees became law:—(1) No association of a religious character shall be allowed to be established, or to exercise its functions in the land without the previous consent of the Government. (2) No association having for its scope charity, education, or propagation of the faith, shall be

allowed to exercise its functions unless its rules and regulations are first approved by the civil governor and administrative authorities of the district and commune. (3) All associations of a religious character that are constituted in conflict with Article 1 shall be immediately dissolved, under Article 282 of the Penal Code. (4) All associations existing for charity or education that are not in harmony with Article 2 shall be immediately dissolved. (5) All associations included in the two first decrees which exist abroad, but which are administered by individuals or societies at home, must bring themselves in six months into conformity with Decrees Nos. 1 and 2. (6) All associations of a religious or educational or charitable character abroad, which within six months have not remodelled themselves according to Articles 1 and 2, shall be immediately dissolved, under Article 282 of the Penal Code.

I come now to speak of Italy, the country that, more than any other, has suffered from the evils of monasticism. For centuries monks and nuns positively swarmed, like locusts, over the land, destroying and devouring everything that came in their way. Venice alone kept them in check. Like the priests, they were entirely subject to the State, not to any ecclesiastical superior; indeed, Venice contested and resisted the right of the Pope to have monastic buildings entered for inspection by his representative. That was their right, not his.

Monks and nuns were declared to be in face of the law civilly dead; therefore they could not inherit property, or make wills. Besides which all their temporal affairs were managed for them by the patrons who founded the institutions, and by lay advocates, to whom they were subject. At the same time, the State insisted that all religious houses should be refuges for the poor and the infirm, and hospitals for the sick. Sometimes the State used the monks and nuns for the dispensing of public charities in times of plague and famine, and sometimes, in periods of public danger, they called the monks under arms. At the same time, in spite of all precautions and restrictions, and useful work, Venetian monasteries and convents, like others wherever planted, slid into corruption, so that at one time the class in the city whose dress was the gayest, whose table was the most sumptuous, and whose lives were the loosest, were the nuns.

The first serious check that monasticism received in Italy was from the iron hand of Napoleon the Great, who, following the good advice of John Knox, "Down with the nests and the rooks will fly away," destroyed monastic plague-spots throughout the length and breadth of Italy, even in its remotest corners. For example, in the highland region of the Dolomites, near Pieve di Cadore, Titian's birth-place, there is a beautifully wooded isolated hill commanding a magnificent view of the Piave valley, called Monte Froppa. It is an ideal spot for a

monkery, and here the order of the Battuti, or Flagellants, monks who scourged themselves in public with knotted cords in order to atone for their sins, had snugly ensconced themselves. Their self-inflicted flagellations did not amount to much, although they wanted them badly; for Ciani, the historian, has said of them: "*Erano più che altro un branco di buontemponi, e di fuggifatica*" (They were more than anything else a herd of good livers, and of sluggards). Napoleon, when in Venetia, heard of this monastery, and resolved to help the monks in their flagellations by sending a company of soldiers to blow the roof off their buildings and disperse them. His action, like most things he set his hand to, was thorough. When I was on the top of Monte Froppa, I saw picturesque broken walls, moss-grown stone garden seats, and tumble-down staircases, in the midst of a tangled wilderness of wild flowers, sweet-scented herbs, weeds and grasses, with multitudes of bees, the descendants of the monks' colonies, flitting about. It was just such a place as all monasteries should be transformed into.

Another example of Napoleon's cleansing work I found amongst the mountains of Umbria, in the valley of the Nera. Noticing some ruins at a short distance from the village of La Valle, I asked an old man what they were. His reply was that they were those of a monastery, and, pointing in another direction, he said, "And these other are the ruins of a nunnery."

The two places communicated, as was too often the case with such institutions in Italy, and were centres of corruption to all the country round. Napoleon, being informed of this state of matters, promptly took action, treating the buildings and their inmates as he had done those on Monte Froppa.

In 1866 Piedmont set the example to Italy by suppressing all monastic houses in her territory, and confiscating their property. Soon after, Baron Ricasoli brought in a Bill in the Italian Chamber which became law, dealing radically with those throughout the rest of Italy, and thus bringing within the reach of all Italians the blessings in this matter which the Piedmontese enjoyed. Excepting but a few houses, the new law declared all religious orders to be at an end, the creation of new monks and nuns to be illegal, and all monastic buildings to be, like the churches, national property. It is rather curious to find that Pius IX. had the same idea of the irremediable character of the monasteries and convents as he had of his own. Speaking of himself, as I have already had occasion to show, he said that "to attempt to reform me would be to destroy me," and so, speaking of the suppression of the religious houses, he said: "It was the devil's work, but the good God will turn it into a blessing, *since their destruction was the only reform possible to them.*" The old man spoke the truth in regard both to himself and the monkeries, but how the

destruction of what was a part of the kingdom of evil could be the devil's work is a mystery. The Pope's illogical speech recalls our Saviour's question to the Pharisees: "If Satan cast out Satan, he is divided against himself; how shall then his kingdom stand?"

Whilst suppressing the religious orders and confiscating their property, the Italian State was careful to preserve the life-interests of the monks and nuns. This was done by allowing them to remain in their respective monasteries and convents, until in any one of them they were reduced by death, or other causes, to such a small number that they could not take care of the building, when such a remnant was removed to some other monastery or convent which had more inmates, and the State took possession of the property. In this way, from July 7, 1866, till July 1, 1901, the property of 64,445 religious corporations has been taken by the Government, representing a yearly income of £2,344,404. Of these, 45,337 have been entirely suppressed, the yearly income of which was £1,963,998, while none of these establishments paid any taxes. No wonder that Italy was poor, with these tens of thousands of vampires sucking her life's blood. Of these corporations some 6,000 were monastic. Their properties have for the most part been utilised by the Government for hospitals, barracks for soldiers, museums of art, magazines for goods, and schools. Thus they are again

largely serving the original design of their foundation, orderly discipline and intellectual development.

“But,” I have often been asked, “since all monastic institutions have been suppressed, and since most of the properties have fallen into the hands of the Government, how does it come to pass that there are still in Italy so many monasteries and convents, and that one sees so many monks and nuns going about?” There are several explanations of this seeming anomaly. If, for example, the monastery happens to be worthy of preservation because of its architecture or its art treasures, which, like frescoes, could not be conveniently removed, then it is declared to be a *national monument* and preserved in its original condition, and a certain number of monks are retained as custodians and showmen. As, however, they rarely turn out competent, they are being gradually replaced by laymen, as at the Certosa, at Pavia, near Milan; at the monastery of San Marco, associated with Fra Angelico and Savonarola, at Florence; and in many other places.

Again, when a monastic property falls in, it sometimes happens that the Government has no use for it. It is therefore thrown upon the market for sale. In such cases the Roman Catholic Church is ever alert, and has generally no difficulty in persuading some rich Englishman or American belonging to its communion to buy it. It is then registered as this

foreigner's private property, when the Church puts back the monks or nuns as the servants of the owner. In this capacity they are registered, and the law cannot touch them.

A notorious case of this is, for example, that of the monastery of St. Francis of Assisi. I remember being shown over that building some years ago by a very young monk. When he had finished, I asked him, "How is it that you are a monk?" to which he replied, "Why should not I be one?" "Because," I said, "your order was suppressed long before you were born." Laughing, he said, "Come and I will show you why I am a monk." He then took me to a door in a courtyard, and, pointing to a coat-of-arms over it, said, "Look at that." It was the arms of the Marquis of Ripon. The property had fallen in, Lord Ripon had bought it, and it had become again an extensive monastery. I could not but think that Lord Ripon's conduct was little to his credit. He knew very well that monasteries were being suppressed, not in hostility to religion, but in its interests and in those of the nation; and yet in this manner he does his best to thwart the efforts alike of Government and people.

Nor is Lord Ripon alone in thus making himself the tool of the Papacy in its anti-Italian policy, nor is such action confined to Assisi. It is in Rome that this creation of monastic institutions in evasion of Italian law has reached its height. In this, I should imagine, all the wealthy Roman Catholic

families in England and in the United States have had a hand. The number of new monasteries and nunneries that have been bought and built in Rome amount at the present time to the enormous figure of three hundred and sixty-two. The positions of these buildings are, as a rule, the best to be found in the Capital. To secure some of them, masses of old houses had to be bought and to be taken down, so that the price of a site alone ran up to twenty and thirty thousand pounds. The monasteries and nunneries themselves are like castles and palaces, or rather like villages and little towns. Many of them are enormous piles of solid and handsome building, such as that of the Minor Franciscans in *Via Merutana*; that of the Benedictines on the *Aventine*; and that of the Carmelites in *Corso d'Italia*.

The Irish Benedictines have erected their palatial residence in the fashionable quarter of *Via Boncompagni*—just such buildings as explain much of the poverty of Ireland. Nunneries of splendid Gothic architecture, and furnished not only with every necessary but with every luxury of life, are to be seen in *Via Nomentana*, in the *Prati di Castello*, and in *Via Guisti*. The capital these buildings represent amounts to millions; but for foreign money, probably not one of them would ever have been erected; and they exist in breach of the spirit of Italian law. Most of them, probably all of them, are registered as private property, paying taxes as such, the inmates of which have no religious status

in the eyes of the law. Practically they are illegal monasteries and nunneries.

However regrettable the existence of such institutions may be, one need not wonder that they do exist. Roman Catholics who do not scruple, or who dare not refuse, to put the interests of their Church before those of their own country, are not likely to hesitate when called upon to put them before those of a foreign Power. Besides, few people realise the condition of helpless slavery to Church and priest in which even many English Roman Catholics live. I have been told that some in high station cannot sign a contract with a tenant-farmer except in the presence of their father-confessors. When one is talking to such men, he is not talking to them, he is talking to the father-confessors behind them.

Lastly, the existence of a monastic establishment may be due to downright falsehood. For example, a monk once came to me saying he was thoroughly disgusted with monastic life, and wished to enter a clean Church. When I asked him to explain the existence of the monastery he was in, he said that it was held in the name of four of the younger monks, of whom he was one. Only they held it not as monks, but as laymen. When the property fell in, a lady advanced the purchase-money, they took off their monk's dress, and as ordinary citizens had their names inserted in the title-deeds as the purchasers. The younger men were chosen,

so as to make as remote as possible the payment of succession duty. Then, as I knew that monks cannot legally live together, I asked him how that difficulty was got over. His answer was: "Priests can legally live together, so, of course, we had all to be registered as priests." These are some of the ways by which the operation of Italian law is frustrated, and by which the existence of monasteries and nunneries in the country is explained.

In all these cases the authorities might easily make inquiry and take action, but they are apparently reluctant to do so, especially when foreigners are concerned. Yet sometimes this has to be done even in regard to so small a matter as the wearing of the monk's dress, which is against law. Some years ago, when I was at San Remo, Queen Margherita passed through the station on her way to visit her mother, the Duchess of Genoa, at Bordighera. The Municipality of the town, the English colony, and others, embraced the occasion to show respect to the Queen by presenting her with flowers. Some Franciscan monks attempted to do the same, but the Queen told the Syndic to bid them withdraw, as she could not receive them in the monastic garb.

The action of Italy and of other countries in regard to monastic institutions reads England a lesson, and a lesson she ought to lay to heart at the present time, when monks and nuns are multiplying within her borders, and are laying a fast grip upon

her soil. An illustration in an Italian paper represents the Religious Congregations of France as a dense black cloud of crows, which Italy is warding off by means of powder and shot. Her stalwart sons point their loaded rifles at the flock. Another illustration shows them stopped at Italy's frontier custom-houses for the examination of luggage. Their boxes are opened, and are found to contain 'lies,' 'superstitions,' 'hatreds,' 'immoralities,' 'ignorances,' 'corruptions,' 'treasons.' And yet in England they are received with open arms! The consequence is that splendid sites are bought, and imposing monasteries and nunneries are being raised, where really there ought to stand dwellings for the poor, or for the hard-working men of the city. Look how the desirable building sites in Surrey have been taken up. In Scotland picturesque old ruins, in beautifully wooded grounds, that ought to have been preserved as national monuments, and as open spaces for the people, are again being degraded back to the uses from which they were saved by fire long centuries ago. The amount of land and building passing into the hands of various religious orders is alarming, and ought to be made a subject of Parliamentary inquiry.

It is urged as an excuse for permitting this state of affairs that monasteries and nunneries are no longer the political and social evils they once were. Perhaps they are not, or perhaps it may only be that their scheming and working to merge

the State in the Church is not apparent, and that their immorality, in deference to public opinion, is, like that of the Vatican, driven underground. In any case, so long as the Church lays claim to absolute sovereignty, and monastic life retains its unnatural character, such houses must ever be burdens and perils to society and to the nation.

There is a beautiful island out in the lagoons near Venice, called San Lazzaro. It belongs to the Armenians, who have there a monastery, which has not been suppressed, but is in full working order, because it is under Turkish rule. The old Republic of Venice having given the island to the Armenians, who were then suffering persecution, they, by claiming at the present time Turkish suzerainty, thus evade Italian law. These Armenians have now, too, deserted their Church and become Roman Catholics. However, as the monks have a printing press, and some of them are men of letters, I always had some admiration for them. The island, too, with its flower and fruit gardens, is so well kept that an excursion to San Lazzaro is a favourite one with all visitors to Venice. What was my surprise, when speaking to an ex-Armenian monk of his old home, and saying, "Well, you have left a paradise," to hear him reply, "Yes, externally a paradise, but internally an *inferno*."

I have been told that Italian men have no difficulty in picking out from amongst a group of young girls those who have been trained by

nuns. Such invariably put a bad construction on every word a man says to them and on his every action. Under the plea of guarding their pure minds from evil, all kinds of evil have been instilled into them. They have been fed on the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of evil, and that knowledge and no other comes out in the look of the eye and the speech of the lips. And yet the prudery of these nuns is such that when honest tradesmen are working in the nunnery they are required to wear bells, so that the nuns may be warned of their approach, and rush into places of shelter!

Personally I do not know much about English monasteries, but what I do know is not to their credit. To the sister of a friend of my own, put temporarily into a convent in Warwickshire because of the good name it bore, and because of the public respect in which the priest who recommended it was held, its authorities behaved; first, like angels, hoping to reconcile her to a convent life. Finding her, however, obdurate, they changed their tactics, and treated her cruelly, releasing her at last under conditions that might have brought about her ruin. It was the old alternative which Italians have had to face for centuries—obey, or be crushed. In regard to the establishment, in April 1902, of a new convent at Bessbrook, County Armagh, Ireland, by Cardinal Logue, Mr. M. McCarthy says: "It will be found to have been a bad day for Bessbrook when that

convent was established in its midst ; and those who participated in it will be proved, as in so many other districts of Ireland, to have been engaged in a bad work, and not in a good one."

And then at home all the evils of the monastic system tend to be aggravated by the exemption of monasteries and nunneries from Government inspection—an exemption utterly unjustifiable. The objection of monks and nuns to Government inspection is their own condemnation. Is it not because the light of day would be disastrous to their doings? "He that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God."

And yet, knowing all this well, and knowing that the history of monks and nuns in England has ever been the history of intrigue and treason and immorality, and knowing that all European nations, even Roman Catholic ones, have been compelled on that account to suppress them, or to control them by special legislation, England foolishly shuts her eyes, and allows them to be increased to any number, and to plot as they list behind their walls, to the detriment of learning and religion, and to the damage of the individual, the family, and the State.

IX

Saints' Days and Sunday

Nor Week-Day Work, nor Sunday Rest

AN Italian newspaper, which I have now before me, has an article entitled "*La Fabbrica di Santi*" (The Manufacture of Saints). The title is strange and suggestive, and the article is worthy of it, and would be amusing, did it not add a fresh chapter of guilt to the history of a Church which has none too many clean pages to show to the world.

The article, after remarking that the priests trade on the ignorance and credulity of the people, so that they put forth the most astounding fables, proceeds: "Not all the saints that the credulous venerate on the altar ever existed. As is well known, the Papal Church, because of the scarcity of men worthy of veneration, was obliged to create a number of saints, enough to satisfy all the parishes, each of which wanted at least one for itself. How did it do so? Easily enough! Exploring the catacombs of Rome, it collected right and left all the skeletons that came in its way,

giving them names at haphazard, and surrounding these names with marvellous stories, so as to cause it to be believed that these bones of unknown people were the holy relics of saints and martyrs. So great, however, was the haste and hurry displayed in this 'Manufacture of Saints,' so great was the press of business, that the bishops and priests, forgetting the saints they had already made, went on repeating the same names and the same miracles over and over. Hence there arose in the Church this extraordinary state of matters, that some saints have many bodies, besides quantities of arms, legs, hands, and fingers."

I might give any number of examples of this, but a few must suffice. To begin with the Apostles. St. Peter has three bodies, one at Rome, one at Constantinople, and one at Cluny, although some fragments of other bodies exist at Arles, Toulouse, Marseilles, Poitiers, and Geneva. St. Andrew has the advantage of him, for he has five entire bodies, besides the head of a sixth. One is at Constantinople, another at Amalfi, and a third at Toulouse; whilst the Russians claim to possess one, and so do the Armenians. The spare head is shown at Rome. But St. James the Greater beats both, for he has seven bodies, besides some extra heads. One body is in Judea, one in Lydia, and one in each of the following cities, Rome, Pistoia, Verona, Toulouse, and one at the famous pilgrimage shrine of Campostella in Galicia in Spain, of which country

he is the warrior patron. The heads are scattered about here and there.

To leave historic personages for others who may or may not have ever existed, we find that St. Pancras, whose name we chiefly know as associated with the London terminus of the Midland Railway, but who is said to have been a boy-martyr, beheaded at the age of fourteen in the Diocletian persecution in the third century, has twelve bodies, of all shapes and sizes, all genuine, as attested by Papal bulls. They are preserved in the following places. Two are in Rome (one in the church of St. Pancras and one in that of the Carmelites), and one in each of the following places, Bologna, Venice, Milan, Avignon, Ghent, Malines, Cologne, Treves, Prague, and one somewhere in Provence.

St. Barbara, the patroness of fortifications and artillery, and who is said to have been a convert of Origen's and to have been beheaded by her own father in 303, has three bodies, one in Venice, one in Piacenza, and one in Egypt. St. Blaise, who was Bishop of Sebaste in Cappadocia, and was martyred in 289, and was once venerated in Yorkshire as the patron of woolworkers, because he is said to have had his flesh torn by the iron combs they use, has three bodies. One is at Sebaste, one at Rome, and the Mahrattas have the third. St. Nicholas, the great patron saint of sailors, was martyred in the fourth century, and buried at Myra. In 1084 the merchants of Bari rifled his tomb, taking his body to their sea-

port town in order to bring it good fortune ; but the Venetians, not to be outdone, rifled it also a century and a half later, and the saint's body is now in the church of St. Nicholas on the Lido. A third body is preserved at Moscow.

Mary Magdalene has four bodies, one at Naples, one at Montferrat, one at Vazalar, and one at Saint-Maxim near Toulon, besides two half bodies in Rome, one in St. John Lateran, and one in S. Maria del Popolo ; whilst her hair, preserved in hundreds of churches, if collected, could meet the world's demand for wigs for a lengthened period.

St. Anthony the hermit has five bodies, one each at Constantinople, Arles, Vienne, in Dauphine, Marseilles, and Nishni-Novgorod. And similar facts could be told of scores of other saints, as St. Laurence, St. Bartholomew, St. Euphemia, St. Crispin and St. Crispianus, St. Simon Zelotes, and St. Valentine, all of whom have two and three bodies apiece.

One other saint, however, I must draw special attention to, as he has been an object for centuries of peculiar honour, veneration, and worship in the Church. Infallible Popes, especially Sixtus v. and Pius ix., have guaranteed by special bulls the authenticity of his claims to be regarded as a Christian saint. A church in Palermo was erected to him, his Italianised name inscribed over its main door, with a command to the faithful to go to him ; inside the church he has his altar, surmounted by his statue in life-size, and having also his name and

the date of its erection, 1750. And who is this saint? He is none other than *Buddha*.

For my facts about this saint I am indebted to Andrew D. White, LL.D., late President and Professor of History at Cornell University, Ithaca, New York State, and until recently United States Ambassador at Berlin. In his work, *A History of the Warfare of Science with Theology*, he tells at some length how, "by virtue of the infallibility vouchsafed to the Papacy in matters of faith and morals, Buddha became a Christian saint." I can only here very briefly recapitulate his argument.

In the seventh century a pious romance was written in Greek in the convent of S. Saba, near Jerusalem, of the life and conversion to Christianity of a noble Hindu prince, called Josaphat. In the eighth century, its authorship being attributed to St. John of Damascus, it "became amazingly popular," and was translated into all European languages, and found a place in the *Lives of the Saints*. In 1590, when Pope Sixtus v. purged the Roman Calendar of numbers of spurious saints, and the churches of numbers of spurious relics, he expressly retained as worthy of worship "the Holy Saint Josaphat of India, whose wonderful acts St. John of Damascus has related." But about this time the Portuguese historian, Diego Conto, discovered that the history of St. Josaphat and that of Buddha were identical, but this disconcerting disclosure was got over by saying that the earlier life, that of Buddha, was

spurious, whilst the later one, that of St. Josaphat, was the genuine one. But ultimately the truth came out, in spite of Papal bulls and Church anathemas, and so "in 1859, Laboulaye in France, Liebrecht in Germany, and others following them, demonstrated that the Christian work was drawn almost literally from an early biography of Buddha, being conformed to it in the most minute details, not only of events but of phraseology, the only important changes being that, at the end of the various experiences showing the wretchedness of the world, identical with those ascribed in the original to the young Prince Buddha, the hero, instead of becoming a hermit, becomes a Christian, and that for the appellation of Buddha—'Bodisat'—is substituted, the more Scriptural name of Josaphat." On July 18, 1870, the decree of *Papal Infallibility* was promulgated, and yet three years later, Pope Pius ix., the infallible Pope, once again ratified the Christian saintship of Josaphat, which historic research had nailed to the counter as a lie.

But one need not wonder, for even if the Church gets hold of a truth it never rests till it builds a pyramid of falsehoods above it. One need not wonder that pagans and fictitious beings are adored as saints, when mules, mice, dogs, pigs, deer, sheep, lambs, and donkeys have all been exalted into that blessed category. At Lodève, in Herault, France, a mouse ate the holy wafer, when straightway the priests pronounced it a saint, and the "Holy Mouse"

is still venerated in that city. Many have heard of St. Anthony's pig, of the deers of St. Julian, St. Eustace, and St. Pelo, of St. Francis' sheep and St. Agnes' lamb, all of which assisted at the mass and worshipped the Madonna; and every one knows of the ass at Verona, which was decreed to be that on which our Lord rode into Jerusalem, and which was carried on Palm Sunday through the streets of the city in procession, all the people uncovering and bowing the knee before it, and which I saw, in December 1902, saddled and bridled, with a figure of Christ upon it, in the church of the Madonna of the Organs in that city. Its stable is above the altar of the side chapel to the left of the high altar. A large altar picture conceals it, but as this picture is on hinges, it really forms the stable door. The ass is of olive wood.

Now most of these saints (and certainly Buddha is not the worst of them), real and fictitious, pagan and Christian, have days set apart in their honour. Thus it comes to pass that there are really far more Saints' days than there are days in the year. This would present a serious difficulty were it not that, whilst the days of very many of them are ordered to be observed by the whole Church, those of the majority have only a local observance. Thus a score of parishes may have the same day for their different saints.

Now the Church insists, under pains and penalties, that all its Saints' days, general and local, shall be

observed. Saints' days, therefore, come into competition with Sunday and swamp it. Fifty-two Sundays in the year cannot hold out against five hundred Saints' days! They are overpowered by numbers. Yes, and they are overpowered by the *authority of the Church*; for the Church, whilst insisting on the observance of Saints' days, does not trouble itself much about the observance of Sunday.

Every traveller in Roman Catholic countries—where the Papal Church still has power—knows that on Sunday, shops and warehouses are open as usual, the smith is hammering at his anvil, the carpenter planing at his bench, the mason and labourer are engaged at their buildings, and everywhere there is the rattle of laden drays and carts. On Sunday the lottery is drawn, and bull fights are held, and the concert-room and the theatre are in full swing; and if there is to be any special dissipation Sunday is sure to be the day chosen for it. On the Sunday I have frequently seen priests, after mass, playing bowls and other games in their seminary gardens or on the village green, and I have seen them sitting drinking with peasants at the village inn of a Sunday evening. The way the "Catholic Boys' Brigades" are taught to spend Sunday is thus reported in the *Irish Catholic* of August 16, 1902: "After mass, the party returned to camp, where games of hurling, football, and handball provided abundance of amusement until the dinner, which was served at one p.m. After dinner the bands

played a selection of Irish airs in camp for a large number of people from Ashford, who had come to visit the camping ground. Tea was served at six p.m., the evening until nine o'clock being subsequently devoted to an open-air concert. At nine o'clock the rosary was recited in the open by the whole party." The mass and rosary, which thus began and ended the amusements of the day, were what the Italians call the "pepper-and-salt flavouring" which sanctifies anything and everything, secular and profane.

Trained thus in Sunday observance in their youth, in maturer years "they do not depart from it," as is shown by the following report, taken from the *Arklow Parish Magazine* of February 1896:—"On Sunday the (R.C.) bazaar was opened at two o'clock, but in consequence of the tug-of-war being held in the open, there was a poor attendance. Later on, however, when the tug was over, the crowds began to flock in, and the rooms were filled almost to suffocation. The bazaar was supposed to have been closed at six p.m., but in consequence of the very large attendance and the profitable trade which was going on all the evening, and the unwillingness of the public to 'quit the premises,' it was not closed until nearly twelve o'clock, . . . and soon after, the work of preparing for the dance was begun. The room was not in proper order until after twelve, and by that time most people had departed, with the result that the dance was not so well attended as it might have

been. Dancing was kept up till a late hour on Monday morning, and an enjoyable night was spent." Mr. M. McCarthy says: "After mass, our Sunday is spent by the laity and the clergy either in pleasure or idleness. It is not spent in devotion. The young men hie themselves off to the country. The priest arranges his afternoon programme of amusement. Hurling, football, cycling, coursing, rabbit-hunting, ratting, and even hunting with beagles and harriers, are indulged in. . . . In the large cities the opening of the public-houses at two p.m. is the greatest event of the Catholic Sabbath afternoon."

On the other hand, the traveller in Roman Catholic countries also knows that on Saints' days the warehouses and shops are closed, building is suspended, the workmen are all thrown out of employment, and the only open doors are those of the churches and the drink-shops. As I heard the late Mr. Spurgeon, when at Mentone, say: "These Roman Catholics break the Fourth Commandment both ways. They neither work on the six days nor rest on the seventh." This observation is absolutely just, and it holds good in whatsoever quarter of the globe the Roman Catholic Church exists.

And now let us carry the inquiry one step farther back, and ask, "How is this? Why does the Papal Church demand the observance of Saints' days, and why does it not insist on the observance of Sunday, instead of directly encouraging its desecration?"

In the first place, it is not possible to keep Saints' days and Sunday too. The breach of the Commandment in resting when one ought to work, leads to working when one ought to rest. I have asked masons and carpenters why they did not rest on Sundays, and got the reply: "How can we observe Sunday when our time is so much broken into during the week by Church festivals?" One must keep the Commandment in its entirety, or break it in its entirety. As Mr. Ruskin said: "If we would keep the Sunday in imitation of God's rest, we must keep the six days in imitation of God's work."

Again, there is a tendency in human nature to exalt the laws of men above those of God, and this tendency the Roman Catholic Church ever fosters and trades upon. A mortal sin is not to tell lies or steal or kill, but to eat meat on Friday, or to not attend mass on Saints' days and Sundays. The Papal Church ever makes the laws of God of none effect through its tradition. As Dr. Walden of Trinity said: "The decrees of bishops in the Church are of greater authority and dignity than is the authority of Scripture."

Another reason is because the Papal Church is the enemy of industry. It does not want people to work six days, and become great merchants and manufacturers, employing many men, because it dreads the influence that such masters might obtain in the workshop and in the community. They might become the rivals of the priest. Besides, the

intelligence required to guide a great commercial concern is incompatible with priestly domination, and must not be allowed to exist.

I had an illustration of this not long ago when driving in Tuscany, the Garden of Italy. We came to a part that was bare, barren, treeless, and fruitless. And when I asked the driver of the carriage how this was, he said: "Oh, this part of Tuscany formed for a time part of the Papal States, when wood was cut down, and the influential proprietors were impoverished, and silk mills that were erected were stopped." It is the same the world over. It explains to a certain extent the difference between the Protestant and Papal cantons of Switzerland, the Protestant and Papal provinces of Ireland, the prosperity of the Protestant and the stagnation of the Papal parts of Canada.

Lastly, though not by any means the least in importance, is the reason, *that Saints' days pay in the Papal Church, and Sundays do not.* As everything has a money value, this determines largely why the observance of Saints' days is insisted upon, but not that of Sunday. On a Saint's day the people, even the poorest of them, bring offerings in money and in kind to the Church. On these days the *Sagras*, Holy Fairs, of which I spoke when treating of the "Pope's Shop," are held around and in the neighbourhood of the church, so that, just as in the old polluted temple at Jerusalem, which our Lord cleansed, sheep and lambs and doves

could be bought for sacrifice, so here oil, candles, and other things can be bought for offerings. I myself have seen hundreds of poor deluded creatures bringing their candles and flagons of oil, and handing them to the priests inside the altar rails, or carrying them into the sacristy, till it appeared like a huge wax and tallow shop. These ought to be burned before the saint, but the custom is to sell them, and so church and priest become enriched. The more saints and Saints' days, the more grist to the mill. Hence Italians have said to me : "Whenever the Papal Church wants money, it pulls out another saint and appoints another festival day."

But on the Lord's Day it is different. Then the services are perfunctory. There are no offerings of candles and oil on that day. Who ever saw a candle or a bottle of oil presented to Christ, or saw a light burning before His figure ? The Sabbath day, like the "Lord of the Sabbath," does not pay in the Papal Church ; hence its secularisation is permitted, and even designed and encouraged.

In Italy all this is well understood, and it is one of the things that has roused the nation against the Church.

Italians want to work, like the inhabitants of prosperous Protestant Christian nations, six days in the week. The rising industrial commerce of the country demands it. Italy is not rich in minerals, but she is rich in water power, and Italians are ingenious, and hence it pays, not only for home

consumption but even for exportation, to import iron and coal and to manufacture machinery. Italy is building her own ships for commerce and for war. The shipping at the chief ports round her extensive seaboard is annually on the increase. Factories for the manufacture of goods, such as cottons, wools, silks, and sugar, are being opened in many places. But it is absolutely impossible that such works can go on if machinery has to be stopped and labour suspended two or three times in a week. Italians feel that they must work six days in the week, or fall behind in the race of nations. Then they are also tired of the poverty and mischief incident to Saints' days, for not only do they earn nothing on these festivals, but they generally spend much in drink and gambling, and their wives in holy oil and candles.

Then, working six days in the week, they feel their need of resting on the seventh. The observance, like the breach, of the two parts of the Commandment, goes hand in hand. And so, some few years ago, Societies of laymen were formed in most of the chief cities of Italy, for the express purpose of reversing the policy of the Papal Church, by the overthrow of the observance of Saints' days, and the observance of the Lord's Day alone, and such festivals as the State might ordain. The efforts of these societies were eminently successful. The cities were canvassed, and the signatures of those willing to accept the societies' proposals were obtained. Vigilance committees were appointed to see

to it that those who signed were true to their engagement. At this time there was seen in the shop windows of the leading business houses of Italy a notice that ran thus: "The public are hereby informed that on *Domenica prossima* (next Lord's Day) this shop will be closed, and on every Lord's Day thereafter, and on national holidays." It so happens that some of these national holidays are also Saints' days, but they are now observed because the State recommends them, not because of the order of the Church.

The attitude taken up by these hostile forces in Italy, the constitutional press and the clerical press, in regard to the movement, was very characteristic. The constitutional press, in no measured terms, approved it, and gave it its support; and as the reformation was effected very quietly and quickly, some papers, with justifiable pride, said, "A change that in many places takes years to effect has been brought about in Italy in a few weeks." But what said the organs of the Papacy? Well, the Church could not for shame's sake openly oppose the movement, especially as it has more or less to play its part with a regard to the feelings of England. And so it said that, though it did not oppose the movement in itself, it did oppose the manner in which it had been started and promoted. It complained that it had not been consulted nor asked to co-operate! One writer said: "No speaker at these lay meetings ever made even a flying reference to the

authority of the Church." Of course not. The authority of the Church had always been, in this as in a thousand other matters, on the wrong side, and so it was simply ignored.

But the opposition of the Church did not rest in words, it exhibited itself in deeds. The patrolling of the streets on Sundays by vigilance committees was not strictly legal in Italy, and the Church put the law in force, so they were stopped. Many shop-keepers, yielding to clerical pressure, began again to open their places on Sundays, especially those that cater for travellers. The "Sunday Rest Associations" had therefore to adopt new tactics. They pasted up on the shutters of the shops whose owners had undertaken to close them bills in four languages—English, French, German, and Italian—asking the public to help them in their endeavours to secure Sunday closing by refraining from making purchases at those shops that were open. The words of the bill ran thus: "The Sunday Rest Association begs you to give it your valid support by abstaining from making purchases in any shop open on Sunday." Since these appeared, slips have also been displayed in many cities with the two words only: "Sunday Rest, Sunday Rest."

Quite recently the book and newspaper men in Italy have taken up the Sunday question, so successfully dealt with by the merchants and shop-keepers, and are now agitating for complete rest on that day. It may not be known that throughout the whole of

Italy almost every daily newspaper is published seven days in the week—that is to say, it comes out on Sundays as on week-days. Besides the daily paper, there are a number of special Sunday papers, mostly illustrated. It is too much to hope that these latter will be suppressed, but the present agitation is to stop the publication of the ordinary dailies on Sundays. It has received a valuable impulse by the action of what is called the Book Federation. This Federation has passed a resolution that its workmen, who are occupied in the publication of newspapers, ought to have the Sunday as a day of repose. Newspaper proprietors have very generally approved of the suppression of the Sunday issue of their papers, and a correspondence is being carried on amongst them, so as to secure a general and united action.

But now at last the Government itself has taken up the question. For some time its officials and employees in public offices and public works, and especially in the post and telegraph departments, who have to work during part of each Sunday, if not throughout the entire day, have been agitating for Sunday rest. In response to them and to the general feeling of the country, on the 24th of April 1902, both Chambers accepted a proposal to take into consideration the desirability of passing a law for the compulsory closing of all places of business and of all shops, public and private, throughout the whole land on *la Domenica*, the Lord's Day. This

action of both Chambers gave unbounded satisfaction to the people everywhere, and meetings were soon afterwards held in all the chief cities and towns in Italy, at which speeches were made in favour of the Government proposal, and resolutions were passed praying them to frame and pass the Sunday Compulsory Closing Law as soon as possible. As a specimen of the tone and terms of these resolutions, I give the one passed here in Venice: "This assembly, convinced of the inalienable right of society, in harmony with its continued progress, to protect the physical and intellectual health of its members, to cultivate the love of family, and to raise the civil, moral, and religious tone of the people; convinced, moreover, that nothing is better fitted to secure these lofty ends than the complete observance of the Sunday; convinced further that the recent action of Parliament in accepting a proposal to sanction this observance by a law of the State will materially further these ends, hereby records its vote in favour of a law which shall compel all business to be suspended throughout the land, so that no man may be able to gain an advantage over his neighbour; and it hereby prays Parliament at the earliest moment to make the proposal now before it the law of the State."

In Italy, then, we may expect to see soon the reproach for ever wiped out, that the Fourth Commandment is broken both ways, the Italians neither working six days nor resting the seventh. Then

shall we see labour carried on during six consecutive days in imitation of God's work, and the hallowing of the seventh in imitation of God's rest, whilst saints and Saints' days will go by the board.

But what of Christian England? Is there not a tendency there to do the very opposite from what is being done in Italy? Has there not been inaugurated, under the noblest lay and clerical patronage, the importation of saints' spurious bones, for which Italy has no further use? We all know, through the public press, of the burlesque enacted at Arundel Castle, in July 1902, in which the Duke of Norfolk, Cardinal Vaughan, and many lesser ornaments and dignitaries of the Roman Catholic Church took part. Pope Leo XIII., in order to show his "goodwill to England," sent from Rome the remains of St. Edmund to garnish the new Roman Catholic Cathedral at Westminster. It was an appropriate gift, for such buildings are usually garnished "with dead men's bones, and all uncleanness." But as the Cathedral is not yet finished, as a further token of goodwill the relics were committed to the care of no less a personage than the Earl Marshal of England. They arrived at Arundel on the evening of July 25, and were placed for the night in the Fitzalen Chapel. The next morning the whole Castle was astir betimes, for the great event of the day, the transference of the bones to the Castle chapel, was to take place. This was accomplished in a solemn and befitting manner. A

procession was formed, and to the measured tread of the Earl Marshal of England, Cardinal Vaughan, several archbishops and bishops, and a mixed company of priests and acolytes, and a numerous train of household servants and dependants, carrying banners, crosses, crucifixes, censers, lamps, candles, torches, and other ecclesiastical stage paraphernalia, the remains of St. Edmund were borne to their resting-place. All went off well, and at last the curtain fell on the finished play, to the satisfaction of every one. Unfortunately, however, the Pope and all concerned had to reckon with English common sense, and with English love of truth, and it was not very long before it was proved to the world that the bones, like most relics of the kind, were counterfeit—whoever else's bones they were, they were not those of St. Edmund.

With the multiplication of saints there follows the multiplication of Saints' days. And is there not a tendency in England to observe such days and to desecrate the Lord's Day? The two evils are, as we have seen, inseparable, and both, I am afraid, are being promoted. And promoted by whom? By the enemies of England and of humanity—Jesuits, Roman Catholics, and the papistical section of ritualists who dishonestly remain in the Church of England, and who are all working, singly and unitedly, to bring back England under the Papal yoke. It is the interest of such people alone to promote these objects.

The Papal Church, baffled in her selfish and immoral tactics in Italy, held in check by civil statutes, and ignored and despised by the people, turns to England, where, thanks to that Protestantism which she hates, she and her imitators enjoy a free hand to work unfettered their evil deeds, one of the most evil of which is to strike a blow at our national prosperity, and at the sanctity and happiness of family and individual life, by promoting the observance of Saints' days, and by the desecration of the Lord's Day, by inculcating the breaking of the Fourth Commandment.

By none in England is the precious boon of Sunday rest and week-day work more valued than by her noblest and most gifted sons; and by none more than by these has England been counselled to value that boon aright, and to safeguard it against the danger to which I have referred as threatening it. It would be well if England's sons and daughters would listen to such counsel and warning, and act promptly and decisively upon it. I therefore close this chapter by quoting a sentence or two of the advice given us on this matter by three of England's representative men, all now gone from our midst.

The late Lord Shaftesbury said: "The people of Great Britain have many peculiarities, and it is to some of them that, humanly speaking, they owe their position among the nations. One of their peculiarities, as contrasted with other peoples, is

the observance of the Lord's Day. It has stamped a vigour of character on their thoughts and actions; it has created a greater liveliness of conscience and a sense of responsibility—qualities without which no freedom can be generous, nor the possession of power be safe, either to the possessor or the subject of it."

Secondly, Mr. Gladstone has given us his counsel, founded on his own personal experience, in these words: "Believing in the authority of the Lord's Day as a religious institution, I must, as a matter of course, desire the recognition of that authority by others. But over and above this, I have myself, in the course of a laborious life, signally experienced both its mental and physical benefits. I can hardly overstate its value in this view, and for the interest of the working men of this country, alike in these and in other yet higher respects, there is nothing I more anxiously desire than that they should more and more highly appreciate the Christian day of rest."

Lastly, Dr. Westcott, the late Bishop of Durham, said—shortly, too, before his end, so that his words come as part of the rich legacy of Christian thought he has bequeathed to the English Church and the English nation: "I endeavour to press on all who hear me the simple counsel, *Guard your Sundays*. I believe that England owes her stability and greatness to the general observance of the day of rest and the study of Holy Scripture. In these times

of reckless excitement and engrossing business, I do not see when we can reflect calmly on the greatest things—the things unseen and eternal—if the quiet of Sunday, ‘the day of the rest of the heart,’ is taken from us.”

X

The Bible

The People's Friend, The Church's Foe

THE present Premier of Italy, Signor Guiseppe Zanardelli, whose words I have already quoted, addressing his constituents at Brescia some few years ago, and referring to the attitude that the Papal Church takes up in regard to the Bible, said that, immediately after the invention of printing, when every press in Europe was engaged printing the Bible, there was one solitary exception, the Pope's press at Subiaco, near Rome. The first book ever printed in Italy was printed there in 1465, and from that time it poured forth a perfect stream of literature of all kinds; but never a book, never a chapter, never a verse of Scripture.

The attitude of the Church with reference to the Bible at Subiaco, was in perfect keeping with the attitude it assumed towards it before the invention of printing, and with the attitude it has preserved towards it ever since. Put into the hands of the people, the Church practically says, any book you

please, no matter how degrading, but do not on any account let them have the Bible. There are few demoralising books on the *Index Expurgatorius*, but there are many editions of the Bible.

The attitude and action of the Roman Catholic Church from the fifth century till the twentieth in regard to the Bible may be summed up under three heads. (1) *Corruption of its contents*. It is an extraordinary thing how, even in fixing the Canon of Scripture, the Latin Church invariably strove to include in it spurious and apocryphal books. Regarding the Bible as but only one of many original sources of truth, it laboured to mix human tradition with Divine Revelation, and in 1546 the Council of Trent decreed that whosoever did not receive the Apocrypha as sacred and canonical, and did not hold tradition to be of equal value with Scripture, "let him be anathema." Hence the corruption as regards the contents of all Bibles bearing the imprimatur of the Papal Church. (2) *Corruption of its text*. All historical and critical investigation of the text is forbidden, and the arbitrary and unscholarly decrees of Popes and Councils determine everything. I say unscholarly decrees, for, speaking of the decree of the Council of Trent just referred to, which, in addition to sanctifying tradition, made the Latin Vulgate the only authentic version, the late Dr. Westcott in his *Bible in the Church* says (chap. x.): "This fatal decree . . . was ratified by fifty-three prelates, among whom there was not one scholar distinguished

for historical learning, not one who was fitted by special study to deal with a subject in which the truth could only be determined by a careful examination of the records of antiquity." Referring, in chap. ix. of his book, to this decree, he speaks of it as "a decision equally untrue morally and historically." Again in chap. x. he says, "It is affirmed that the Church has power not only to fix the extent of the Canon, but also to settle questions of text. The field of biblical study is definitely closed against all free research." (3) *Open and avowed hostility to the Bible, and to all those who read the Bible.* As early as 860, Pope Nicholas I. pronounced against both; Gregory VII., in 1073, confirmed the ban; and Innocent III., in 1198, declared that all who read the Bible should be stoned to death. In 1229 the Council of Toulouse passed a decree against the possession or reading of the Bible. In 1564, Pio IV., when confirming the decrees of the Council of Trent, issued a bull to the same effect, with disastrous effect. It was designed to stop the Reformation in Italy, and, coupled with the extermination of all, high and low, known to have embraced it, it had that effect. To quote the words which I heard Prof. Salvatore Minocchi, a priest in Florence, use in a lecture on the Bible given in Venice on February 6, 1903: "For two hundred years the Bible in Italy was an unknown book." Well might he add that then "commenced the decadence—moral, religious, and political—of Italy." It is true that Sixtus V., the "Swineherd

Pope," who was elected in 1585, influenced probably by his friend Fra Paolo Sarpi, brought out an edition of the Bible in the vernacular, but neither he nor it were allowed long to live, for in 1590 he was poisoned, and it was suppressed, by the Jesuits. In 1600, Clement VIII., who burned Giordano Bruno, decreed that any one found reading the Bible in the vernacular would be sent to the galleys for life.

In England, in the fourteenth century, any one found possessing the Bible of Wycliffe, that "organ of the devil," as he was called, incurred the penalty of death. In Coverdale's preface to his Bible, published in 1535, he says: "The Bishop of Rome has studied long to keep the Bible from the people, and especially from princes, lest they should find out his tricks and his falsehoods, lest they should turn from his false obedience to the true obedience commanded by God, knowing well enough that, if the clear sun of God's Word came over the heat of the day, it would drive away the foul mist of his devilish doctrines." On the accession of "Bloody Mary" to the throne of England, in 1553, there existed a painting in London of King Henry VIII., in which he was represented standing holding in one hand a sceptre and in the other a Bible with the words on its cover, *Verbum Dei*. This exhibition of the "Word of God" was so offensive to Papal eyes that it was obliterated, and a pair of gloves painted in its place. And we all know how during the reign of Mary—that same good daughter of the Church—tons of Bibles were used as

faggots to light the piles for martyrs, than which, it was said, "no burnt offerings could be more pleasing to Almighty God."

The hostility of the Roman Catholic Church to Bible Societies is well known. Bishop Milner, in his *Supplementary Memoirs of English Catholics*, says: "Public crimes go on year by year in proportion to the progress of the Bible Societies." And since their foundation Popes have vied with each other in the ferocity of the bulls they have fulminated against them. Thus Pius VII., in 1816, denounced them as "pestilences to be arrested by any means possible," and Leo XII., in 1825, as "traps and pitfalls." Pius VIII., in 1830, denounced all the Bibles that issued from their printing presses as "centres of pestiferous infection," and Gregory XVI., in 1844, condemned the Societies, and instructed the priests to tear up all the Bibles that they could lay their hands on. The punishment inflicted on any one found with a Diodati Bible was incarceration in the State prisons for an undefined period.

The vilifying of Bible Societies became a bad habit with Pius IX., who surpassed all his predecessors in the use of fiery invective. It was under his ægis that Count Guicciardini, Guerra, Guarducci, and many others were banished from Tuscany for reading the Bible. It was under his ægis that Francesco Madiati and his wife were arrested in Florence, in August 1851, for reading the Bible, were imprisoned in the Bargello for ten months, and then sent to the galleys. It was

also under his ægis that an English gentleman, Arthur Walker, was arrested for having a Bible in his pocket, and was imprisoned.

And what about the attitude of the present Pope, Leo XIII., in regard to the Bible? In considering this, we must remember that he has here to play a part, as he has in a thousand other things, so as to save appearances in face of England and America? Having lost Italy, he can never afford openly to outrage public Protestant opinion. And so, in 1893, he actually issued an Encyclical, *Providentissimus Deus*, which seemed to reverse the policy of his predecessors, by permitting the reading of the Bible. But, as all in Italy knew at the time, the Encyclical was insincere, and immediately on its issue secret instructions were given to the priests to do all in their power to prevent the sale of the Bible, and also its distribution gratis amongst the people by travellers. The priests, especially the younger men, started a Bible hunt, which, though much less effective than they hoped, yet diminished the circulation of the Bible in Italy for a time. It was in the autumn following the publication of the Biblical Encyclical that I saw, what I had never seen before in Italy, New Testaments and portions of Scripture, chiefly the Gospels, which had been given to peasants in their homes and in the fields, collected and burned in front of the village church.

I am aware that the Pope has recently sanctioned what is called a "Roman Biblical Commission." This,

I am told, he was compelled to do, sorely against his will, by the growth of biblical exegesis in Protestant lands, and the spread of the "Higher Criticism." But the Commission is purely literary, and its labours, should they amount to anything,—for there is a convenient vagueness about their proposed meetings and doings,—will not modify by one iota the hostility of the Pope and the Church to the Bible as a religious guide to be put into the hands of priests and people. There is a growing desire among certain young liberal-minded priests to study the Bible from a critical and historical standpoint, but until the decree of the Council of Trent in regard to the Vulgate is rescinded, no real free research is possible.

But it may be said that this hostility is directed against Protestant versions and not against Roman Catholic ones, which, like that by Martini, have received the sanction of the Pope. But such is not the case. The opposition is against the Bible, Roman Catholic or Protestant, pure and simple. For example, the Martini version is published by the Church, I have been told, in two forms, one so large and so costly that the people cannot buy it, and one so small and so illegible that nobody would care to have it. Whilst the Church gave it with one hand, it thus withdrew it with the other. Besides, Martini Bibles have shared the same fate as Protestant ones when they found their way into popular use. On May 18, 1849, some three thousand copies of the New Testament, according to the Martini version, were

seized and destroyed in Tuscany. Priests have told me that even they were not allowed to possess a Martini Bible without the Papal consent, and that the very fact of applying for such consent would bring them under suspicion, and so damage their prospects in the Church. Therefore, they said, "we have no Bibles."

I am also aware that in June 1902 the Society of St. Jerome, Rome, prepared and printed at the Vatican press a translation in Italian, with notes, of the Four Gospels, and of the Book of the Acts of the Apostles, and published the whole in one volume, at a low price, ranging from twopence to fourpence, according to the binding. I think the publication is one in the right direction, although I disagree with the Society's criticism of the Protestant Bible, and with its interpretation of many texts. I believe that this Society owes its origin to the desire of the young priests, of whom I have just spoken, to spread Bible knowledge. But whether it has the authorisation of the Vatican, or is only tolerated, cannot be certainly known. The Italian press thinks that the movement will not come to anything, but Protestants engaged in the circulation of the Bible believe that their great success has convinced the Church of the impossibility of keeping the Bible from the people, and that, therefore, to minimise the evil, its best course is to authorise, or to wink at, the circulation of its own arranged version.

Students are not taught the Bible in the Papal seminaries. They have many text-books—Alfonso de Liguori's especially—but no Bible. Count Campello was trained for the priesthood in the Academy of Noble Ecclesiastics, the highest training college in Rome (to which once only men of noble birth were admitted, but into which now not one such can be induced to enter), and yet during all his years of study he never even saw a Bible. He was a priest in orders when an uncle of his—a layman, not an ecclesiastic—whom he was visiting in Florence, made him a present of one.

Mr. Austin West, in the *Contemporary Review* for April 1902, on *The Abbé Loisy and the Roman Biblical Commission*, says: "Throughout the length and breadth of Italy there is no sort of society for Biblical Studies. An Academy of this nature which once existed at Rome, under the presidency of Cardinal Parocchi at the Propaganda Palace, soon languished and died from lack of interest and encouragement; and all the recent efforts of Padre Lepidi, who summoned a conference at the Vatican last May to found another in its stead, were doomed to failure. Can this be wondered at when, in fact, there is no Chair of Biblical Criticism in the Roman Ecclesiastical Schools, and when at the Gregorian and Minervan Universities—to cite only two instances—none of the two thousand and odd Church students who flock thither annually are ever examined in Biblical knowledge, nor is any standard of proficiency demanded even

from that selecter group who go forth decorated as Bachelors and Doctors of Theology?"

The Bible is no weapon in the armoury of the *Propaganda*. In the vast halls of that "Sacred Congregation," no Bible nor portion of a Bible exists for the use of the people. In its colleges students are trained to become missionaries, and their training consists in instruction in the classics, in oriental languages, in philosophy, in theology, and in canon law, but not in the Bible. And when they go forth on their missions they are instructed to make free use of the printing press for the circulation of Catholic literature in the language of the natives of the country, but that literature never includes a page of Holy Scripture. I believe there is no instance in history of Roman Catholic missionaries ever having put either the Jewish or Christian Scriptures into the hands of their converts.

A curious thing happened at the so-called Œcumenical Council, held in the Vatican in 1869-70, at which the infallibility of the Pope was decreed. Döllinger and Dupanloup, in supporting their arguments against the insensate proposal, wished to refer to some passages of Scripture; but no one had a Bible in the whole Council, nor could one be procured for them within the bounds of the Church, so one had to be borrowed from the Protestant chaplain of the Prussian Embassy!

The ignorance of the Roman Catholic clergy of the Bible is only equalled by their hostility to it.

The two go hand in hand. Padre Curci, the learned Jesuit, who died a few years ago in a convent at Fiesole, to which he had been banished by the Vatican for his liberal writings, said, in his work *Vaticano Regio*: "If theological study in general has waned and degenerated amongst our clergy, biblical study has been entirely abandoned. The activity of the Protestants in the study of the Bible, which ought to be to us a noble incentive, has been made a pretext for calumny to such an extent that already in some large dioceses an understanding is allowed to circulate quietly amongst the younger clergy that, as the study of the Bible is a Protestant affair, it would be a curse to any one to engage in it."

As bearing out what Padre Curci has said, let me tell what happened in Padua a short time ago. A Young Men's Christian Association was formed there, which began to make headway, and so alarmed the Curia. The priest in whose parish the Association met, called upon the mother of the president, and denounced him, telling the poor woman that her son had got bad books, and was going headlong to *inferno*. The mother listened quietly, and then said: "It may be so, but it does not look as if it were; for he used to drink, he does not drink now; he used to swear, he does not swear now; he used to stop out late at night, he is always home early now; but I will send him to you with all his books and you can judge for yourself."

Accordingly the young man called upon the

priest, and first of all he handed to him a New Testament, printed by the British and Foreign Bible Society. The priest said : "That is a bad book ; you must burn it." "Very well," said the young man. Then he handed him a little book, entitled "*Vita e Parole del Signor Gesù*" (The Life and Words of the Lord Jesus). This book consists of the Gospel of Luke, and the discourses of Christ, taken from the other three Evangelists. But it is a book that I had published by Catholic publishers. The priest looked at this book, saw who published it, and handing it back to the young man, said : "That is a good book, you may keep it." "But," said the young man, meaning to be entirely frank with him, "this book is simply a part of that one" (the condemned New Testament), and then he explained what it was. The priest answered : "I know nothing about that ; all I know is that the one is a bad book, published by Protestants, and the other is a good book, published by Catholics."

A friend of mine, now an evangelist, when a young, zealous Catholic in Turin, got hold of a New Testament, and took it to the priest. The priest said : "You have got hold of a very bad book. That book was printed in hell." The words awoke the young man's curiosity, and, in spite of the protest of the priest, who desired to have it, he took it home and read it. The result was his conversion, and his dedicating himself to Christian work.

The *Provincia*, a daily newspaper of Pernam-

buco, in Brazil, reported the burning, in February 1903, of 214 Bibles in front of the chief church of that city, "amid enthusiastic cheers for the Catholic religion, the Immaculate Virgin Mary, and the Pope, Leo XIII." And, to come nearer home, the same thing took place, at the same time, at Laibach, in Carniola, Austria. Bibles collected by the priests were piled up in the chief square of that town, were then saturated with petroleum, set fire to, and reduced to ashes, they and the people frantically applauding. About the same time Bibles were burned publicly by priests and nuns in Fiji, referring to which fact Dr. Fitchett said: "There is only one Church which will burn the Bible, and that is the Church which burnt the men who gave us the Bible."

The fact of the matter is that the priests really know nothing about the Bible. The complaint of Erasmus, made in 1513, that nothing was known of the Holy Scriptures, except the portions from the Gospels and Epistles that occur in the Church services, which were so read and intoned as to be unintelligible to the understanding of reader and hearer, might be made with equal force to-day. Nor do the higher clergy as a class know much more of it than the common priest. I have been told by one of themselves that the canons of St. Peter's cannot turn up a passage in the Bible. I do not at all feel sure that the Pope himself could! The *Contemporary*, of April 1894, relates the following conversation:—"Do you allow your flock to read

the Bible?" a friend asked a parish priest. "No, sir, I do not," was the answer; "you forget that I am a spiritual physician, and not a poisoner of souls."

To the question, why in the Papal Church is there all this hostility to the Bible, and all this ignorance of the Bible, I shall allow a priest who is at present in the Church, but who is being persecuted for his loyalty and Christianity, as all such priests invariably are, to give the answer. After saying that he wants Roman Catholics to possess the Bible in the vernacular and to read it, and that he wants his brother-priests to know it and to preach it, and to comfort the sick with its Divine words, he adds: "But, alas! I fear that these my wishes will never be realised. And why? *Perchè il giorno in cui preti e fedeli Cattolici si mettessero a leggere e meditare la Bibbia, quel giorno sarebbe l'ultimo per la Chiesa Romana, per i preti, per i monsignori, e per il papato*" (Because the day in which the priests and Catholic believers give themselves to the reading and the study of the Bible, that day will be the last for the Roman Church, for the priests, for the monsignors, and for the Papacy). To this answer I may add words used by the present Premier of Italy in the speech he made at Brescia, from which I quoted at the beginning of this chapter: "Woe to the Roman Catholic Church when my countrymen get hold of the Old and New Testaments, then they will know the difference between Jesus Christ and His so-called Vicar."

Happily for Italy, but unhappily for the Papal Church, whose plague and ultimate destruction, according to the sure forecasts of the Italian Premier and the Italian priest, are bound up with it, the Bible is circulating in Italy, is being got hold of by the people. The very day that saw the temporal power of the Pope destroyed, saw the people in Rome itself put into the possession of this, which is emphatically the People's Book. For on the 20th of September 1870, when the Italian troops entered Rome, by the breach they made in its walls near the Porta Pia, a cart laden with Bibles, driven by a Roman convert and accompanied by a colporteur of the British and Foreign Bible Society, entered with them. The old driver still lives in Rome, and speaks of that day, as he well may, as the proudest in his life. The Italian troops were the pledge of the material liberty of the people, the Bible was the pledge of their intellectual, moral, and spiritual liberty. And year by year since then the importation of the Bible, and the circulation of the Bible, has gone on at a steadily increasing rate.

A tremendous help was given to the spread and sale of the Bible in Italy when, in June 1888, the editor of the *Secolo* newspaper published a paragraph in praise of the Bible, saying: "There is a book that contains the poetry and science of humanity. It is the Bible, to which no work in any literature can be compared. It is a book necessary for the culture of all classes, and it ought to be found in every home.

The Bible is denominated 'the Book' *par excellence*, and also 'the Book of books.' No book was ever considered to have such importance in the history of literature, and in that of the development of intelligence in general, as the Bible. No book merits so much as it to be the object of profound study."

The editor proceeded to announce his intention of giving the Bible to his countrymen, publishing it in 210 parts, at five *centesimi* (one halfpenny) a part, of eight pages each, accompanied with 900 illustrations, for the production of which duplicate plates of those used in Cassell's Bible, published in London, had been obtained. He added: "This artistic, useful, and popular edition, *the first of its kind in Italy*, is destined to have an extraordinary success." His prophecy was literally fulfilled.

Five years later, in October 1893, I noticed a second announcement in the *Secolo*, which said that the immense success of the first edition of the Bible, which was now entirely sold off, had induced the editor to publish a second edition. I then wrote to the editor, with whom I had already been in correspondence, for particulars as to the first edition, and I was indeed surprised and gratified to learn that he had sold 50,000 copies—that is, he had sold 10,000 copies on an average annually for five years; and as each copy, when completed, cost 10 francs, he had sold 500,000 francs worth, or, in English money, £20,000 worth. The Italians, in cities,

towns, and villages, actually spent £20,000 in purchasing the Bible, that book which the Papal Church had used its influence and ingenuity to suppress ever since the invention of printing, and for several preceding centuries.

Nor is this all the good that ensued. The publication of this native Bible familiarised the Italians with the book. They ceased to regard it as a foreign, and a Protestant book, and began to recognise it as a universal book, the heritage of all nations, and the foundation of all religion worthy of the name. The result was that the Bibles and Testaments published by the British and Foreign Bible Society and other Societies found a new and ready acceptance. Colporteurs could say: "The *Secolo* Bible costs you ten francs, but I can give you a complete Bible for one franc." The circulation of foreign-printed Bibles has since then gone up by leaps and bounds. Year by year more copies are sold and given away of the Holy Scriptures than of any other book. In point of circulation it is recognised to be in Italy "the Book *par excellence*," "*the Book of books*." Yes, and also in point of thought and teaching and style and language, for, though religion is not taught in the public schools, yet in those that exist in Rome for teaching foreign languages to Italians, the New Testament has been adopted as a reading-book both in French and English, for students in what are called classes of the second course. I may also say that the translation of the

Bible into Italian, which Giovanni Diodati, the great Calvinistic theologian and Professor at Geneva, the friend, too, of Fra Paolo Sarpi, made in 1603, is considered by the Educational Department of the Italian Government as a classic, and its study as such is recommended for the sake of its style. Diodati, though born in Switzerland, was the descendant of a noble family of Lucca, which had to go into exile because of its having embraced the Reformed Faith.

Italy is thus, simply by the possession of the Bible, not to mention all the other Christian agencies, in a fair way of once again knowing the truth that made its early sons, in different parts of the country, as at Ravenna and Venice, so great and powerful. The late Dr. William Arnot, of Edinburgh, used to say: "In order to kill mischievous weeds you must not only pluck them up and cast them out, but you must sow the field from side to side with a closely growing crop of precious grain." As in Italy both these processes are at work, we may entertain the hope that soon the Papal weeds of error and superstition, of falsehood, and the offering of "salvation in sin," instead of from it, will be rooted out, and "the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ, unto the glory and praise of God," may be seen to flourish in the individual and national life of this classic people and land.

XI

Mariolatry

Mary supplanting Christ

FRA PAOLO SARPI, the greatest of the Venetians, in the second book of his *History of the Council of Trent*, when relating the discussion that arose in the Council on the question of Original Sin, sketches, in few words, the rise and progress of Mariolatry in the Papal Church. He tells us that the phrase "Mother of the Divine Son," which towards the close of the third century was applied to Mary, was so used not in her honour, but solely in honour of Christ, to show that He was born Divine.

In the same way, after the deposition of Nestorius, the Patriarch of Constantinople, by the Council of Ephesus, in 431, the picture, so common now everywhere, of the Madonna and Child, was adopted in order to show that Jesus was Divine from His birth, in opposition to the heresy of Nestorius, which was that Christ was born merely human, but that afterwards at baptism He received the Holy Ghost without measure, constituting Him Divine. Then, by degrees,

the phrase I have referred to was used in honour of Mary, instead of Christ; and, in the same way, the mother became venerated in the picture, and not the Child, until *resta egli nella pittura come appendice* (He remains in the picture as an appendix). In conformity with this, I may here say, the picture itself was altered.

Originally, as is still seen in the sculptures and mosaics of St. Mark's Church, Mary was the chair on which Christ, the God-Man, sat, He having all the emblems of divinity—the gold disk with the shadow of the Cross on it, the open Bible, and the hand raised in blessing; now, in most modern pictures, He is represented as a helpless babe, and she is crowned and sceptred as the Divine mother (not the mother of the Divine Son), the Queen of Heaven.

To go back to the record of Fra Paolo Sarpi, he tells us that in the eleventh century a canonical office was instituted in honour of Mary, with forms of prayer only addressed previously to the Divine Wisdom. Mariolatry, thus introduced, gained ground slowly during succeeding centuries by the decrees of Church Councils, and by bulls of Popes, until the Jesuits came on the scene in the sixteenth century, when it advanced by leaps and bounds.

At Ravenna, Forli, Piacenza, and many other cities in Italy, as well as in Rome, as a matter of course, great columns are to be seen erected in their chief market-places, on which stands a female figure, with a crown on her head and a sceptre in her hand.

They are monuments to Mary, the Queen of Heaven, raised to commemorate the doctrine of her *Immaculate Conception*, which was promulgated by Pope Pius ix., on December 8, 1854, in St. Peter's, Rome, by the bull "*Ineffabilis Deus*." This doctrine had been long simmering in the mind of the Church. As far back as the twelfth century it was mooted; in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries it formed a bone of contention between the two mendicant orders of the Franciscans and the Dominicans; in the fifteenth century, at the Council of Basle, it was declared that the doctrine was in harmony with Faith, Reason, and Scripture; in the sixteenth century the Council of Trent pronounced in an indirect way in its favour; in the seventeenth century the Jesuits promulgated the doctrine everywhere; in the eighteenth century, under their influence, one Pope after another observed it by offices and festival days; until in the nineteenth century it became, as we have seen, an article of faith in the Church, to deny which is heresy, meriting eternal punishment.

But not only is Mary declared to have been born free from the taint of original sin, but she is declared to have led an absolutely sinless life. Like her Divine Son, she was "holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners." In a book published in Rome, at the Pontifical Press and Library, 1899, called *Manual of Indulgences*, I read these words: "The Virgin Mary, immaculate and always pure, never required to expiate even the shadow of an

imperfection, having been always more holy than Cherubim and Seraphim." A Dominican preacher is reported by Mr. McCarthy, on the authority of the Dublin *Evening Telegraph* of December 9, 1901, to have spoken thus of Mary, whom he called "The Queen of Saints": "After years of striving, of generous correspondence with God's abundant graces, other saints at the close of life reached the perfect acceptability in God's sight of having their souls immaculate. It was there she began. Her giant strides in the course of her unimaginable sanctification commenced with a perfect spotlessness."

But beyond this, Mary's life is represented as a life of privation and sacrifice, and therefore, like Christ's, one of atoning merit, which united with His is a propitiation for sin. The writer in the *Manual of Indulgences* above quoted, says: "All her life was one of continual prayer united with privations and sacrifices. Now by as much as the virtues and holy works of Mary are meritorious, by that amount they are an atonement that cannot be applied to her, and under this aspect, that they may not be lost, they are united to the merits of Jesus Christ. All the more that Mary worked and suffered in perfect conformity with the intention of Jesus Christ in order to satisfy Divine justice."

Mary thus, declared to be associated with Jesus Christ as the Saviour of the world is worshipped as such. Sometimes praises and prayers are addressed to God through her as the great Mediatrix between

God and man, but generally they are addressed to her direct, without reference to any person of the God-head. Of such prayers, here are a few specimens out of hundreds that might be given. I extract them from the *Manual of Indulgences* already mentioned :—

“Remember, O Most Holy Virgin Mary, that it has never been known that any one was abandoned who had recourse to you, imploring your aid, begging your succour. I, animated by this confidence, O Mother, Virgin of virgins, to you come, to you have recourse, before you as a contrite sinner I prostrate myself; do not, O Mother of the Word, disdain my prayers, but graciously hear me and answer me. Amen.” “My Lady and my Mother, I give myself entirely to you, and in proof of my devotion I offer you this day my eyes, my ears, my mouth, my heart, all I am. Since, then, I am yours, O good Mother, guard me and defend me as your thing and possession.” “I adore you, O great Queen, I thank you for all the grace you have given me till now, especially for having liberated me from hell, many a time merited by me. I love you, most lovely Lady, and for the love that I bear you I promise to be willing always to serve you, and to do all I can, in order to get others to love you too. I place in you all my hope, all my salvation; accept me as your servant, and gather me under your mantle, Mother of Mercy.” “I venerate you with all my heart, Most Holy Virgin, above all the Angels and Saints in Heaven, as the Daughter of the Eternal

Father, and I consecrate to you my soul and all my powers." "O Most Holy Virgin, Mother of the Incarnate Word, treasury of grace, and the refuge of us miserable sinners, we betake ourselves to your maternal love with lively faith, and we ask of you grace to do always the will of God and of yourself. We place our hearts in your most holy hands, and we beg the salvation of our souls and of our bodies. We assuredly hope that you, O most loving Mother, will hear us, and for that reason, with lively faith, we say '*Ave Maria.*'"

Many more festival days are dedicated to the honour of Mary than to any one else. A few of these are the following: her Nativity (September 8); her Presentation in the Temple (November 21); the Annunciation (March 25); her meeting with Elizabeth (July 2); her Immaculate Conception, observed on the anniversary of the day of its promulgation, by Pius ix., on December 8, 1854; her Purification, called also Candlemas, from the lighting and consecration of candles in the Church (February 2); and her Assumption (August 15).

Besides these great festivals, to be observed by all her worshippers, every city and town and village has its own one or more local Madonna days. Then, over and above all that, each Saturday is dedicated to her, and the whole of the month of May, called emphatically Mary's Month, and the whole of the month of October, called the Month of the Rosary.

Throughout these periods, as on her other festival days, her praises are chanted in the *Ave Maria*, the *Stabat Mater*, the *Ave Maria Stella*, the *Litanie Lauretane*, and the *Rosario*. About these last two I wish to say a few words.

The *Litanie Lauretane* is so called from the Holy House of Loreto, already referred to—that is, the house Mary was born and brought up in, which of itself flew through the air from Nazareth to Tersatto, near Fiume, in Dalmatia, in 1294, whence, after an eight years' stay, it came to Italy, settling, after several flittings about, at Loreto. This Loreto Litany begins well and ends well, for its opening words are the *Kyrie Eleison*, and its last the *Agnus Dei*; but the bulk of it—that is to say, forty-six out of its fifty-eight verses—are addresses to Mary, in which she is invoked under a variety of the most extravagant titles, such as Most Holy Mary; Most Holy Generator of God; Mother of Divine Grace; Mirror of Justice; Seat of Wisdom; Cause of our Joy; Mystical Rose; Tower of David; Tower of Ivory; House of Gold; Ark of the Covenant; Gate of Heaven; Morning Star; Health of the Sick; Refuge of Sinners; Comfort of the Afflicted; Queen of Angels, of Patriarchs, of Prophets, of Apostles, of Martyrs, of Confessors, of Virgins, of All the Saints; Queen conceived without Sin; Queen of the Most Holy Rosary; and such like. The other, the *Rosario*, literally Rose-garden, consists of the repetition of one hundred and fifty *Ave Marias*, with

a *Pater Noster* between every ten; hence the name is applied to the string of beads, consisting of one hundred and fifty small ones, divided into divisions of ten by fifteen bigger ones, which Roman Catholics use to facilitate the counting of the correct number of *Ave Marias*.

It is a sad thing to have to say that no Pope has done more to advance Mariolatry in the Roman Catholic Church than the present one, Leo XIII. Because of this, he is called the "Pope of the Rosary," and amongst his thousand and one utterances in praise of Mary, and to inculcate her worship, is the following, in which he gives his own experience, which he issued as an Encyclical in 1893 with the title, "The Rosary of Mary." I quote it mainly from a translation in the *Anglican Church Magazine*. "As often as occasion permits me to rekindle and augment the love and devotion of Christian people towards the great Mother of God, I am penetrated with a wondrous pleasure and joy in dealing with a subject which is not only most excellent in itself, and blessed to me in many ways, but is also in tenderest accord with my inmost feelings. For, indeed, the holy affection for Mary that I imbibed almost with my mother's milk has vigorously increased with growing years, and has become more deeply rooted in my mind. The many and remarkable proofs of her kindness and goodwill towards me, which I recall with deepest thankfulness, and not without tears, kindle

and inflame more and more strongly my responsive affection. For in the many varied and terrible trials that have befallen me, I have always looked up to her with eager and imploring eyes, and my hopes and fears, my joys and sorrows, have been deposited in her bosom; and it has been my constant care to entreat her to show to me a mother's kindness, and to be always at my side.

"When, then, in the secret council of the providence of God, I was raised to the chair of the blessed Peter, to rule his Church . . . I strove in prayer for the aid of Divine assistance, trusting in the maternal love of the Most Blessed Virgin. And this my hope, throughout all my life, has never failed to help and console me in every crisis. Hence, under her auspices, and with her mediation, I am encouraged to hope for still greater blessings, tending to the salvation of the Christian world and to the glory of the Church. It is therefore right and opportune that . . . we should set apart carefully the month of October to the celebration of our Lady and august Queen of the Rosary. *For when we betake ourselves in prayer to Mary*, we betake ourselves to the Mother of Mercy, well disposed toward us, that, whatever trials we may be afflicted with—and more especially in our striving after everlasting life—she may be always at hand, and may lavish on us the treasure of that grace, which from the beginning was given to her in full plenty from God, that she might be a Mother worthy of Him.

. . . *Let us therefore not approach Mary timidly, or carelessly, but pleading those maternal ties wherewith she is most closely united with us through Jesus; let us piously invoke her ready help, in that method of prayer which she herself has taught us, and accepts.* Then we may rest securely and with joy under the protection of the best Mother. . . . I desire to conclude this present exhortation, as I began it, by again, and with greater insistence, testifying the feelings which I cherish towards the great Parent of God, mindful of her kindness, and full of the most joyful hope. My hope in Mary, my mighty and kind Mother, grows wider day by day, and ever beams upon me more brightly; and I refer to her intercession the very many and great blessings which I have received from God."

Leo XIII. might have written the lines which Dr. Arnold tells us he saw painted on a wall in a street in Rome, near an image of Mary—

*"Chi vuole in morte aver Gesù per Padre,
Onori in vita la sua Santa Madre."*

(He who wishes in death to have Jesus for father,
Let him honour in life his Holy Mother.)

Dr. Arnold's comment on this is: "I declare I do not know what name of abhorrence can be too strong for a religion which, holding the bread of life in its hands, thus feeds the people with poison."

The cult of Mary in the Roman Catholic Church has not only come into rivalry with the worship

of God and Christ, but it has to a large extent supplanted it. Every church has its Lady Chapel, and one can easily tell which it is, for, if service is going on in the church at all, it is going on there; and if not, it is the chapel that is enriched the most with votive offerings—silver hearts, crosses, rosaries, scapularies, splints and crutches, and other mementoes of her supposed cures and healings. Very often, too, her statue is set on the high altar, if the church is dedicated to her, and sometimes a life-size image of her, dressed in old, faded, cast-off finery, with an abundance of glittering tinsel ornaments, and tin crown and sceptre, is set in a chair on a raised dais to be adored—an altogether hideous and repellent figure. For, as Mr. Ruskin says in his *Stones of Venice*, “It matters literally nothing to a Romanist what the image he worships is like. Take the vilest doll that is screwed together in a cheap toy-shop, trust it to the keeping of a large family of children, let it be beaten about the house by them till it is reduced to a shapeless block, then dress it in a satin frock, and declare it to have fallen from heaven, and it will satisfactorily answer all Romanist purposes.” And, as is well known, the very Lord’s Prayer has been changed to “Our Mary, who art in Heaven, hallowed be thy name,” etc.; the *Te Deum* has been altered thus—

“We praise thee, Maker of God :
We acknowledge thee, Mary the Virgin.
All the earth doth worship thee,
Spouse of the Eternal Father.

To thee all angels and archangels,
 Thrones and principalities, faithfully do service.
 To thee the whole angelic creation
 With incessant voice proclaim, Holy, holy, holy Mary!"

I have got before me at this moment the *Psalterium Marianum*—the Psalter of Mary—by St. Bonaventura, the General of the Franciscans. St. Bonaventura lived in the thirteenth century, and I suppose the book was compiled then, but the copy I have bears the date 1873, and was published by the *S. C. de Propaganda Fide*; the book is therefore in use now. It consists of a version of the Psalms, arranged, with prayers and hymns, for different times and days. As the title of the book shows, the whole compilation is addressed to Mary; but the one fact I emphasise here, as showing to what audacious and blasphemous lengths the Papal Church goes in its worship of Mary, is that, in the first verse of every psalm when the word LORD occurs, it is changed to LADY (*Dominus* is made *Domina*), so that all the prayers and ascriptions of praise in the psalms are addressed not to the Lord, but to Mary. When the word LORD does not occur, then the word Mary is introduced. Let me give a few illustrations.

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| Ps. i. 1. | Blessed is the man who loves thy name, O Virgin Mary, thy grace shall comfort his soul. |
| „ iii. 1. | O Lady, how are they increased that trouble me. |
| „ v. 1. | Give ear to my words, O Lady! and turn not away from me the beauty of thy countenance. |
| „ vii. 1. | O my Lady, in thee have I hoped, free me from mine enemies. |

- Ps. ix. 1. I will praise thee, O Lady, with my whole heart, I will tell forth to the people thy praise and thy glory.
- „ xiii. 1. How long, O Lady, wilt thou forget me?
- „ xvi. 1. Preserve me, O Lady, because I hoped in thee.
- „ xviii. 1. I love thee, O Lady of heaven and earth, and I call upon thy name amongst the people.
- „ xix. 1. The heavens declare the glory of the Virgin Mary, and the fragrance of thy ointments is dispersed amongst the people.
- „ xxii. 1. O God, my God; look upon me in thy merits O Mary, for ever Virgin. My Lady, I have called upon thee by day and night, and do thou visit thy servant in mercy.
- „ xxvi. 1. My Lady, my light is the splendour of thy face.
- „ xxviii. 1. To thee will I cry, O Lady, and do thou hear me.
- „ xxxii. 1. Blessed are the hearts of those that love thee, O Virgin Mary, their sins by thee shall be mercifully blotted out.
- „ xl. 1. I waited patiently for thy favour, O Lady.
- „ xlv. 1. O Lady! thou art our refuge in all our troubles.
- „ xlvii. 1. Thou art great, O Lady, and greatly to be praised.
- „ lv. 1. Give ear to my prayer, O Lady, and despise not my supplication.
- „ lvii. 1. Be merciful unto me, O Lady! be merciful unto me, because my soul is prepared to do thy will.
- „ lxv. 1. Praise waiteth for thee, O our Lady, in Zion.
- „ lxvi. 1. Make a joyful noise unto our Lady, all the earth.
- „ lxviii. 1. Arise, Mary, and let thine enemies be scattered.
- „ lxxi. 1. In thee, O Lady, I have hoped, let me never be put to confusion.
- „ lxxvii. 1. With my voice I cried unto the Lady, and she graciously heard me.
- „ xci. 1. He that dwelleth in the helping-place of the Mother of God shall abide in her protection.
- „ xc. 1. O come let us sing unto our Lady, let us rejoice in the Virgin our Saviour. Let us come before her presence with thanksgiving, and make a joyful noise unto her with psalms. O come let us worship, and fall down before her.

- Ps. cii. 1. Hear my prayer, O Mary, and let my cry come unto thee.
 „ cx. 1. The Lord said to our Lady, Sit, my Mother, at my right hand.
 „ cxvii. 1. O praise our Lady, all ye nations ; praise her, all ye people.
 „ cxxi. 1. I will lift up mine eyes to the Mother of Christ, from whom cometh comfort to all flesh.
 „ cxxvii. 1. Except, O Lady, thou buildest the house of our heart, the edifice will not endure.
 „ cxxviii. 1. Blessed are all who fear our Lady.
 „ cxxx. 1. Out of the depths have I cried to thee, O Lady. O Lady, hear my voice.
 „ cxl. 1. Deliver me, O Lady, from the evil man.
 „ cxli. 1. O Lady, I have cried to thee, hear me.
 „ cxlv. 1. I will extol thee, O Mother of the Son of God, and I will sing thy praises from day to day.

One can hardly imagine a worse perversion of Holy Scripture than that of which I have given specimens. If there is one book of the Bible dear to Christians the world over, if there is one book more than another which they read daily, drawing out of its marvellous treasure-house “things new and old,” for their comfort and guidance and strengthening in all possible circumstances, it is the Book of Psalms ; “for,” to use the words of the late Bishop of Durham, “it contains the words of many men, in many ages, who realised each for himself, under most different conditions, the master-truths of the glory, the faithfulness, the mercy, the love, the righteousness, the sovereignty of God, the Lord of Israel and the King of the whole earth.” And it is precisely this book, the heritage of the individual Christian and of

the Church, which the Papal Church has degraded and destroyed.

I pass to another strange fact in the cult of the Madonna. If all this perversion of Scripture and ascription of praise and adoration were applicable to one Madonna alone, if the Roman Catholic Church had been content to create but one new Divinity, to add but a fourth person to the Godhead, it would have been idolatry enough. But it has not been content simply to do that. Why should it? If one Madonna brought an advantage, to be doubled by having two, and quadrupled by having four, and increased twenty times by having a score, or twelve dozen times by having a gross, why not have them?

There is no reason against it. This is apparently what the Church itself felt, and so having created one divine Madonna, it has gone on creating them, and it goes on still. The manufacture of Madonnas is now part of the recognised policy, of the recognised industry, of the Papal Church. There are now as many Madonnas as there are days in the year, or rather, as there are human needs and human desires, and human jealousies and passions. Thus, if one wants to win at the lottery, he prays to one Madonna; if to get rid of a cough, to another; if to make money, to a third; if to have good health, to a fourth; if to be avenged on an enemy, to a fifth; if to get rid of a pain, to a sixth; if to have good wine, to a seventh; if to destroy Freemasons, whom Pope Leo XIII. calls *il vero esercito del demonio* (the true army of the

devil), to an eighth ; if to be saved from pestilence, to a ninth ; if to destroy heretics, to a tenth ; if for success to the Jesuits in their nefarious intrigues, to an eleventh ; if for souls in purgatory, to a twelfth ; and if to be saved from fire, water, accident, lightning, and all "the ills that flesh is heir to," to as many others.

To give a list of the names of all the Madonnas in the Papal Church would be to compile a town directory, so the following must suffice as specimens : My Lady of Health, of Grace, of Hate, of Good Counsel, of Reward, of Perpetual Succour, of Snow, of a Cough, of Sinners, of Miracles, of Hope, of Refuge, of Babies, of the Pillory, of Baked Bread, of the Wash Tub, of Vines, of Figs, of Victory, of Money. Then, besides the Madonnas of well-known shrines, such as Lourdes, Pompeii, Loreto, Salette, Saragossa, and others, almost every village and hamlet has its own local goddess. At Rimini there is a winking Madonna, and Pope Pius the Ninth issued a decree authorising the clergy to ornament her head with a crown of pure gold,—“Thou settest a crown of pure gold on *her* head,”—and he ordered that her adoration should be promoted, especially on August 15, the anniversary of her fabled assumption.

Now, let us ask, Why does the Church thus multiply Madonnas until they are as plentiful as blackberries, and why does it thus magnify Madonna worship until that of God and of Christ become secondary and unimportant ? For various reasons.

Firstly, it is an arrangement borrowed from paganism. Of course Roman Catholicism is paganism veneered, as it has been said, with Christianity. But in its essence, and in all its ceremonies and customs, it still is essentially pagan. Mr. Ruskin speaks in the *Stones of Venice* of "the Papacy being entirely heathen in all its principles." Now, just as the heathen had "lords many and gods many," the patrons and patronesses of all their virtues and vices, so it is to a large extent in the Papal Church. These Marys just take the place of the ancient classic goddesses. Secondly, it is to make what the Italians call *concorso*—that is literally, a running alongside; hence rivalry, competition, opposition. Thus one finds the peasants of one village running down the Madonna of a neighbouring one, and lauding their own. Thus people are found pitting one Madonna against another. "My Madonna is strong; she can do anything," I have heard some people say; to which others would reply, "Why, ours is by far the stronger; she obtains for us whatever we want."

When Count Campello left the Papal Church, the Archbishop of Spoleto sent a message through his sister, then an ardent Papist, that he wanted to see him. On Count Campello calling upon him, he said: "I was glad to see you in the chapel of the Holy Images the other day, and I hope you felt them influencing you to return to the bosom of the Church?" Count Campello replied that he felt no

such influence. "Then," said the archbishop, "go to such a Madonna, and pray there and leave a gift; and if she does not help you, go to such another; and if you are still obdurate, go to such another." Count Campello could stand it no longer, and so he retorted, "It is a shame of you, a so-called Christian bishop, to talk to me in that way. Why, you are no better than an old pagan, who would say, 'Go to Venus, and if Venus does not help you, go to Diana.'"

But to the explanations afforded by paganism and competition, must be added a third, namely, *to make money*. If Mariolatry did not pay, it would not be cultivated. We have already seen, when considering the Roman Catholic Church as "The Pope's Shop," what paying concerns the shrines I have mentioned are. Why, a share in one of them is as good as a share in the Army and Navy Stores! And then, just as the festival days of the saints are the priests' market-days, so are those of Madonnas. Amongst the cuneiform inscriptions discovered and deciphered by Mr. R. F. Harper in the ruins of Kouyunjik, near Nineveh, and which are now in the British Museum, is one to this effect: "Yesterday, the third day of the feast, the god Ashur and the goddess Belit were in good condition carried out of the temple, and also in good condition they were again brought back to it. All the gods that were brought out with the god Ashur were returned in good condition to their temples."

That is exactly what is done to the local Madonnas in Italy and in other Roman Catholic countries at the present day. The description is part of a report to the King of Nineveh; it might be a report to the Pope. On the festival days of these Madonna goddesses they are brought out of the temples dressed and crowned, and, set on a platform, are carried round their villages in procession, to be seen and admired and worshipped, and to collect gifts in money and kind. Of course, no Mary can do anything for nothing. Like the Nineveh gods and goddesses, she must be propitiated with gifts, and as her strength and resource and willingness to give blessings are all exactly proportioned to the number and value of the gifts bestowed upon her, the way to keep her in good humour, and make her responsive, is to give to her frequently and generously.

Therefore the more Madonnas there are, the more competition amongst them, and the more Madonna festival days, the more money flows into the coffers of the Church and into the pockets of Pope and priest. As a Venetian gentleman said to me, "The Madonna pays better than anything else," therefore the Church multiplies her by the dozen, therefore the cult of the Roman Catholic Church is *Mariolatry*.

Mary in the Magnificat calls herself the "hand-maid of the Lord," the servant of the Lord; and the Saviour has told us that "the servant is not above his Lord." Need we, therefore, wonder that a

Church that sells Christ daily on the altar for so much hard cash should not scruple to trade and traffic in His mother, multiplying the one, as it multiplies the other, for its own sordid ends!

The late Ruggero Bonghi, who had the distinction of being at one time the only clerical member in the Italian Parliament, but in whom clericalism was associated with culture and intelligence, was accused of having, at a banquet given in honour of Zola in Rome, used words offensive to the Madonna. Replying to this in a letter to the daily press, he said: "*I* offend the Madonna! the dearest, sweetest, purest, holiest idea of womanhood that the human mind can conceive! No. But those offend her who make merchandise of her, who pretend to spread her worship whilst they are only seeking gain for themselves, and who even do not fear to clothe in a pagan garment the dearest Christian image. Oh, how happy that day would be to me in which the Catholic nations would divest themselves of those beliefs that degrade them in the eyes of Protestants, and in which the priests would cease to obscure the minds of the people with ludicrous superstitions! That day the Madonna would be loved and venerated, and no longer would a multitude of Madonnas usurp her place, created by a cupidity that only insults her, and renders, too frequently, her action morally inefficacious." Poor Ruggero Bonghi died without seeing that day, and so will all like-minded Roman Catholics so long

as the Church lasts, for the Reformation of the Church would involve a change equivalent to its destruction.

Cardinal Vaughan a few years ago actually took upon himself to dedicate England to Mary, and he and many others are doing their best to introduce her worship, setting up her image wherever they can. Let us hope that the people of England will set as low a value upon these images as John Knox did. On one occasion, when he was a prisoner in a French galley—"for the word of God and for the testimony of Jesus"—one, "a glorious painted lady," was given him to kiss. John Knox threw it into the sea, saying, "Let our Lady now save herself; she is light enough: let her learn to swim."

No one more than Mary herself would resent the dishonour done to her Lord and ours through this Mariolatry, and the dishonour done to herself in degrading her to the level of a pagan Diana.

XII

Clerical Education

Mental and Moral Atrophy

THE late Bishop of Durham, in a passage in his book, *Lessons from Work*, says : " Life would be easier indeed if we might once for all surrender ourselves to some power without us. It would be easier if we might divest ourselves of the divine prerogative of reason. It would be easier if we might abdicate the sovereignty over creation with which God has blessed us, and shrink up each into his narrowest self. It would be easier, but would that be the life which Christ came down from heaven to show us and place within our reach? No, my friends : everything which makes life easier, makes it poorer, less noble, less human, less Godlike."

What Dr. Westcott in these words deprecates is exactly that which the Roman Catholic Church demands. It demands that men and women should surrender themselves completely to its guidance and authority ; that they should divest themselves of all those faculties that constitute the very image of God

in which they were created ; that they should cease to investigate for themselves, to think for themselves, to reason for themselves, to judge for themselves ; that they should leave off considering all those problems in regard to this life and the next, in regard to whence they came and whither they are going—problems that have occupied the minds of thinking men in all countries and in all ages.

Count Campello has often said that the only unpardonable crime he could commit in the eyes of the Church was *to think for himself*; and a man holding a responsible Government position in Venice said to me : “Your faith calls on you to investigate all things, but my faith forbids me to investigate anything. It is like a great wall built up before the eyes of my mind, to shut out all vision.” He might have said that the Church destroys mental eyesight altogether. It deals with human beings as a trap-door spider deals with beetles, when it first picks out their eyes, and then leads them captive at its will. Dr. Arnold must have felt this strongly, for, when travelling in Italy in 1840, in a letter written from Modena, he says : “As we are going through this miserable State of Modena, it makes me feel most strongly what it is to be *ἐλευθέρος πολέως πολίτης*. What earthly thing could induce me to change the condition of an English private gentleman for any conceivable rank of fortune, or authority, in Modena? How much of my nature must I surrender? How many faculties

must consent to abandon their exercise before the change could be other than intolerable?"

Now, as education demands the exercise and development of all the manifold and wonderful faculties with which God has endowed us, and as the Roman Catholic Church (at any rate in Italy) demands the very opposite, as it demands that the best and noblest of these shall not be exercised at all; as it demands, in fact, their atrophy through continued disuse, therefore it is, and must ever be, the enemy of knowledge, of culture, of education.

We have already seen how, when Erasmus was a boy of fourteen in a monastery near Deventer, in Holland, he bitterly complained that whilst he was free to conduct himself as he liked, "*Study was a forbidden indulgence.*" And on another occasion he said: "An abbot will issue an order to a brotherhood in the name of holy obedience. And what will such order be? An order to observe chastity? an order to be sober? an order to tell no lies? Not one of these things. *It will be that a brother is not to learn Greek. He is not to seek to instruct himself.*" The Papal Church, founded, to a large extent, on superstition and ignorance, has ever been afraid of knowledge, of study, of education; hence she only consulted her own life's interests when, in the Middle Ages, she decreed knowledge to be identical with heresy, and heresy to be punishable by death. Hence when, at that time, the civil power was simply the tool of the Church, the

scientists, philosophers, and scholars who dared to investigate the truth and to think for themselves, were imprisoned and burned. It was so with Giordano Bruno, the great philosopher, who lay in the dungeons of the Inquisition in Rome from 1593 till 1600, when he was brought forth and burned in the Campo dei Fiori, where now stands his monument. When Galileo was summoned to Rome in 1615, to answer for his heretical views in astronomy, Fra Paolo Sarpi advised him not to go, as the Church knew nothing of science, and had only two arguments, the rope and the stake, and that his mouth would be closed for the future, which was exactly what happened, for he was forbidden "to hold, teach, or defend" his doctrines.

But it is often asserted that, before the Reformation, learning was entirely in the hands of the clergy. To a certain extent it is true. But what they knew—speaking of them as a whole—was entirely, during the later centuries, unworthy of the name of learning. They could read and write, which the greater number outside their ranks could not do; but this acquirement was valued by them, not for any useful purpose, but because it enabled them more effectively to dominate over the minds of others. And the knowledge they had and imparted was utterly useless and often mischievous. It consisted of theological hair-splittings and of fables regarding the saints, always incredible and childish, and often scandalous and immoral.

A great part of a monk's time (and well for him

if he were not worse engaged) was occupied in copying, and sometimes illuminating, useless missals and breviaries. But one has only to remember the awful wickedness that obtained in all religious houses, before the Reformation, to realise the impossibility of the existence of any real, valuable learning alongside of it. Erasmus speaks of the love of learning having gone, in his day, from the clergy to secular princes, and that whilst the former talk about their wine, the latter talk over it of useful topics.

As a matter of fact, European education dates from the Reformation. But for Luther and Melanchthon, we might still be living in the Dark Ages. The schoolmaster was the direct creation of Protestantism. Wycliffe, by his translation of the Bible into English, long before Luther's day, too, helped to "roll the stone from the well's mouth"; and the English Reformers were those who enabled the common people to draw from that well living water, and opened for them many a well of wholesome secular knowledge besides. And every one knows what Scotland owes educationally to John Knox, "the one man without whom Scotland, as the modern world has known her, would have had no existence." The public provision now made in every civilised State, for the securing to all those born within the realm the blessings of a good, sound, elementary education, is the direct fruit of Protestantism. The possibility of men and women having all their powers drawn out and cultivated

to the fullest degree, and all in due relation to each other; the possibility of men and women becoming noble in character and noble in life; the possibility of their fulfilling all their duties in fullest measure as members of the family, of society, and of the State, is all the direct fruit of Protestantism.

In Italy, where there was no Reformation, or rather, where the Reformation was effectually stamped out by "rope and stake" (a quarter of a million people, including many of the nobility and many of the *Alto Clero*, having been simply butchered by the Papacy), there was virtually no education till the overthrow of the Pope's temporal power, and the birth of the young Kingdom of Italy, in 1870.

I have already said (p. 29) that education was entirely in the hands of the priests up till 1870, and that some of the mottoes they as teachers adopted were: "Tolerate vice, and proscribe thought;" "Keep the people ignorant, they are more easy to govern;" "Destroy the class called thinkers." Let me now go more fully into the matter.

Other clerical mottoes and maxims were: "Crush talent, for talent is dangerous;" "We do not want learned men, we want submissive subjects;" "The political results of education are to be dreaded;" "A teacher who leads the young to liberal ideas is the worst of sinners;" "We must drive our pupils to obedience or to despair." In illustration of this last maxim, an Italian gentleman told me that when he was at school the teacher picked out all boys of

talent, or who were given to study. He then spoke to them of the priesthood, encouraging them to think of it and to give themselves to it. His conduct towards them was first kind and persuasive and coaxing. If, however, they refused to listen to him, if they resisted his overtures and showed a determination not to become priests, then the priest found constant pretexts to punish them. He stripped such boys naked, tied them to the backs of other boys, and lashed them round the school-room. He was "driving them to obedience or to despair," or, in other words, he was determined that they should either enter the priesthood, or be forced in despair to leave the school, and become vagabonds, and land in a prison or on the scaffold. My friend who told me this, was himself so treated. He fled from school and from Italy, to return a patriot soldier to fight for the liberty of his country from Papal domination.

Universities were in the same condition as the schools. All the professors were priests, or were compelled to wear the priestly dress. No student could matriculate without presenting a bishop's certificate as to his "good, religious, moral, and political conduct." All had, further, to furnish at stated times certificates of confession and communion. They had all to attend the endless fasts and festivals of the Church. All their movements were watched, and what was one of the most dreadful facts in connection with this, students who were suspected of liberal tendencies, and students who were observed

to be studious and thoughtful, were quietly got rid of, and often were in secret put to death.

And what, after all, could the education amount to, when there were no chairs of history, no chairs of political economy, no chairs of philosophy or of law, and no chairs of modern literature? And for those chairs that were established, what kind of professors could be secured when their yearly salary was in some instances less than that of the policeman who guarded the class-room door! Some of the professors were Jesuits who were not unlearned men, but the language which the writer of the article "Education" in the *Encyclopædia Britannica* applies to such teachers is strictly applicable here: "They gave the best education of their time in order to acquire confidence, but they became the chief obstacle to the improvement of education. . . . They have tracked out the soul to its recesses, that they might slay it there and generate another in its place; they educated each mind according to its powers, that it might be a more subservient tool to their own purposes."

And what about books? I have already said that the Bible was forbidden, and newspapers were few, and "doctored" to suit Papal ideas. English newspapers like the *Times* and the *Standard* were carefully collected and burned when travellers had done with them. Dante was forbidden, so was Macchiavelli; so was Manzoni, and many other modern authors. The duty on imported books was

so heavy as to be prohibitive, and certain books, such as political and historical works—in fact, books that treated of the subjects that belonged to the forbidden university chairs—could not be imported at all. They were destroyed if found. Shakespeare was occasionally forbidden. Scientific books were forbidden, because, as Adolphus Trollope says, “the cultivation of the physical sciences had become incompatible with the security of the Papacy.” Often books of that kind were burned by the hands of the public hangman.

Dr. Arnold, in a letter from Bologna, wrote on July 23, 1840, as follows: “The ignorance of the people is prodigious—how can it be otherwise? The booksellers’ shops, sad to behold—the very opposite of that scribe, instructed to the kingdom of God, who was to bring out of his treasure things new and old—these scribes, not of the kingdom of God, bring out of their treasures nothing good, either new or old, but the mere rubbish of the past and the present.” And Mr. Stillman, in his *Union of Italy*, writing of the state of matters in the time of Pope Pius ix., says: “On the whole, the condition of the people at large, under Papal rule, was one of the most complete intellectual and moral lethargy I have ever known or can conceive.”

The writer on “Education” in the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, from whom I have already quoted, says: “The Italian Government, in taking possession of Rome, found that the pupils of the *Collegio*

Romano were far below the level of modern requirements." They found that, and a great deal more, as I shall now proceed to show.

One of the first matters to which the Italian Government turned its attention, so soon as it had established itself in Rome, was education. The promptitude and thoroughness with which it addressed itself to this, are worthy of all praise. As we know, the Italian troops entered Rome on September 20, 1870, and by the end of November—that is, in little more than two months after—a Royal Commission was appointed to examine young men and boys with a view to their admission into advanced and elementary lay schools that the Government proposed instantly to open.

The Commission began its work on December 3, and on December 12 its Report was laid before the Minister of Public Instruction. The Chairman of the Commission and the writer of the Report was Senator Francesco Brioschi. That Report I now translate, as nothing is better fitted to give a full, clear, and accurate idea of the state of education as given by the priests of the Church under the ægis of the Pope. After speaking of the joy with which the people of Rome received the proposals of the Government, as the more intelligent knew the lamentable condition of educational affairs,—without method, without patriotism, without any programme,—and of how the revelations made by the Commission came to many as a surprise,

Sig. Brioschi goes on to say: "I confess that amongst those most surprised was myself, because the ancient fame of certain schools had made me believe that, even if some studies were conducted badly, and some neglected (for political and confessional motives), others were conducted with great enthusiasm.

"If we knew that natural science, history, and geography were hardly taught at all, we believed that the study of Latin, of Greek, and of classic antiquities, which were intimately connected with the origin of the people, with the life of the place, and with the story of its monuments, would be in a flourishing condition. Instead of which, the examinations revealed to me that the knowledge of Latin was in almost all the students weak and imperfect, and that Greek was almost wholly unknown. The written papers containing translations and versions, like those in composition, I found full of solecisms, and what is worse, of errors in grammar. The least incorrect were lacking in elegance of speech, and in turns of speech appropriate to each several language. In the oral examinations many had difficulty in explaining and translating a simple passage from a prose author. As to Greek, knowing the weakness of the students, the examinations were all oral, yet no student was able to afford us any satisfaction. There were some who were barely able to give us an idea of comparison; many were not able to read, excepting a few words, and that with difficulty; in fact, Greek was a perfect failure.

“But perhaps Latin and Greek were neglected because they gave themselves seriously to the study of Italian? Nothing of the kind. The examinations in Italian gave results almost identical with those in Latin and Greek, so that we were forced to conclude that even this study was neglected, not only from the point of view of philology and æsthetics, but also from that of history, some of the students having no idea of historical and literary periods, confounding Dante, Segneri (a famous seventeenth-century Jesuit preacher and writer), Petrarch, and David!

“The students have acquired the habit of beginning to write without knowing what they are going to say, putting down on the paper unconnected ideas as they chance to come into their minds. Grammatical errors, too, are not rare. As to the study of mathematics, I may say all I have to say in few words: in the students I examined I found no knowledge of the subject whatever, nor had they any idea of what geometry and algebra and arithmetic were.

“Such was the instruction of the young men who came out of the Schools of Humanity and of Rhetoric, and who asked to be admitted into the courses 1 and 2 of the Lyceum.

“The examination for the Gymnasium and the Technical Schools revealed a state of things still more deplorable. Dealing with young men who had not passed through the classes of Humanity and

Rhetoric, but only one or more of the classes of the Gymnasium, or who had come from district schools, and who asked to be received either into the classes of the Gymnasium immediately above those they had passed through, or into one of the three courses of the Technical Schools, we examined them in Italian and Latin, in geography, in history, and in arithmetic. We endeavoured to exercise the very greatest leniency, but it grieves me to say the greater part of the students could not answer questions the most common and the most easy. As to written exercises, they revealed a state of things worse still, namely, that the youths, with rare exceptions, did not know Italian at all ; that language was not taught in the schools, as it was considered as an extra subject. We examined young lads of fifteen, sixteen, and even up to eighteen years of age, who did not know the parts of speech nor the conjugation of the verbs. Some of them excused themselves by saying that the Italian language was prohibited in the schools, and others that it was not to be studied excepting after Latin. For this reason, to examine them in syntax, in etymology, in pronunciation, in orthography, in parts of the grammar and in logic, was simply to throw time away.

“ Pupils examined in geography did not show the slightest knowledge of the earth ; were ignorant even of Italy, of its seas, of its mountains, of its rivers, and of its most populous and most celebrated cities. After this, it is useless to speak of history. If they

were ignorant of Italy, they could not possibly have any knowledge of the people who inhabit it, or of the places to which they emigrate.

“In the examinations for admission into the Technical Schools, the results could not be different. Having examined, by writing and verbally, in the Italian language, in history, and in geography, the pupils seeking admission into the second and third classes of the Technical Schools, we were filled with astonishment. With but very few exceptions, the pupils were not able to distinguish between pronouns and nouns, nor to tell anything about regular verbs.

“Of their knowledge of geography and history, it is better not to speak at all. The point to which the ignorance of the young men in Rome reached in these things is simply incredible. Asked about geography, some did not know even the meaning of the word. Others, after they had assured me that they had studied the subject for one or two years, told me that the Adriatic was a mountain, that Sardinia was a city, and that Milan was the capital of Sicily. Very many did not know the population of Italy; many thought the name of the Peninsula was that of a city; and there were even those who said to me that if they were not able to answer me I ought to consider that they were Romans, and not Italians. Asking, then, the pupils regarding the chief events in Italian history, there were none, with one or two rare exceptions, who could answer. One

answered that Brutus was a tyrant, others that Dante was a French poet, others that Petrarch was one of our celebrated poetesses. Regarding Columbus, one told me that he was an apostle, and another said he was the Holy Spirit!

“Regarding a knowledge of arithmetic, the pupils who were least ignorant were those who had studied out of Rome, and those who came from the schools of the Jews. Those who made the worst appearance were the pupils who came from the public Ecclesiastical Schools of Rome. If such were asked if they knew what arithmetic was, they answered ‘No’; but if asked if they knew ‘numbers,’ they answered that they ‘knew how to count,’ and some said that they knew how to ‘sum up.’ They had no knowledge of how to define any properties of numbers, and still less how to demonstrate them. We observed, too, a great inability to write down certain numbers at dictation, as, for example, the number 70,028. No one succeeded in writing numbers of this kind, excepting after repeated changes and corrections and additions. This state of things it was not difficult to foretell, since technical instruction, and therefore mathematical training, in the first stage, were entirely lacking.”

The Report ends by saying that “the pupils had to be admitted to the new Government schools, not by the results of the examinations but by favour”; and it expresses the hope “that, as the young men are not unintelligent, the new scholastic methods of

the Government will soon bring about a better state of things in Rome and in the provinces."

The hope expressed at the close of this Report has been fully realised. "A better state of things," an infinitely better state of things, has been brought about "in Rome and in the provinces," throughout the length and breadth of Italy, through the "new scholastic methods." Before, however, saying more of that state of betterment, I wish to tell what the "new scholastic methods" are, not only because they have proved so effective in themselves, but because Italy in adopting them reads England a very important lesson.

In the first place, the Government realised, what the Government of England has not yet realised in its educational dealings with Ireland, Malta, and the French parts of Canada, the utter hopelessness of creating an educated people if education is left, or placed, in the hands of the Roman Catholic Church. As well might one expect figs of thorns and grapes of thistles, as the fruits of culture and learning in those who receive only a clerical education. Such an education means a shrivelling up of the intellectual and moral fibre of a child, so that it becomes unable to think, whilst what it has been taught it has to unlearn in after years. I do not know any means that can be adopted so well calculated to deteriorate boys and girls, and to render them utterly unfit for the work and battle of life, as to place them for their education in schools managed or taught by

priests or nuns ; and when a nation's children are so placed no counteracting influences that may be used in after years will avail to save that nation from being anything better than a blot and blemish on the face of humanity. Even the Roman Catholic Bishop O'Dwyer, in his testimony before the Commission on University Education, 1901, to which Mr. M. McCarthy was one of the first to draw attention, admits this. He said of the boys who had passed through the Intermediate Schools of the priests : " I will simply say this in general, that nine-tenths of them are lost, and that they are now going to swell the ranks of the *declassés*, without an education that is worth a button to them for any useful purpose." I remember once hearing Gavazzi most eloquently argue that priests and nuns, by reason of their profession, of their upbringing, of their unnatural state of life, of their whole surroundings and aims and objects in work, were unfit to have contact with the youth of any country, and that the first duty of a Government was to protect the children of the realm from their pestiferous influence as teachers. Teachers ought to be laymen, and laymen alone. I remember, too, that Count Cavour warned young Italy against the peril of employing priests as teachers, in these words : " Woe to the country, woe to the class which shall entrust them exclusively with the education of its youth." And Italy laid the words of Gavazzi and of Cavour to heart.

The first action of the Italian Government was therefore to eradicate the clerical element from the public schools, to turn out the priests and nuns bag and baggage. This, unfortunately, it could not do at one stroke. It had not lay teachers in sufficient numbers to take their places. It lost no time, however, in getting rid of as many as possible. Next, Normal schools were at once established for the training of male and female teachers. As soon as any students attending these had finished successfully their courses of study, priests were dismissed as teachers, and they were installed in their places. Thus gradually, and with an ever accelerated progress, a revolution in the teaching staff of the country was effected. I recollect many years ago going to the Municipality of Venice, and asking the Chairman of the School Board how many priest-teachers he had. His answer was an emphatic "Not one. I sent the last one adrift some months ago." I believe that years ago every Municipality in the country had done the same thing, so that there is now hardly a priest-teacher in any National school in the land. All the teachers in such schools are new laymen.

The Government of Italy claimed it as its prerogative to determine the kind of teaching every child in the realm should receive up to a certain age. Therefore it established a system of national education, which is free, compulsory, secular, and lay. No priest has contact with any child in the

matter of education between the years of six and nine. After that age, I need not say, the child is safe. As a father once said to me: "These priests want to confirm my children before they know their right hand from their left, because they fear that the moment the child can judge and think for itself it will give them the go-by."

At the same time, I have noticed, when visiting these National schools, that the classes for the first-year children were always the best attended, and that the attendance diminished as one passed from these to those of the second year, and on upwards to those of the third and fourth years. This caused me once to remark to a village *syndic* (mayor): "You do not sufficiently enforce the compulsory clause." He answered: "We do nothing by force now in Italy." Then I said: "How are you going to secure a general school attendance, so that all the children of your village may be able to read and write?" "In this way," he answered: "a boy who can neither read nor write loses all his civil rights. We have no illiterate voting. Our experience is that on this account parents who take their children away too soon from the day schools generally take care that they go to evening schools. Indeed, the boys themselves are ambitious to go, so as not to become ciphers in the State."

As a matter of fact, I have never spoken to a boy or girl in Italy of, say, from eight to ten years of age, who could not read. No doubt in Southern

Italy and in Sicily there may be such children, but I have never met any such in Northern or Central Italy. The possession of the knowledge of reading, writing, and arithmetic by the whole rising generation of Italy is one of the elements in the "better state of things" that the "new scholastic methods" have brought about.

But it is only one element among many. The instruction imparted is altogether truthful and wholesome. Instead of stunting and vitiating and depressing the mind, it expands and purifies and enlivens it. The text-books conveying that instruction are well written, well arranged, and well illustrated, and they deal with all kinds of subjects, a knowledge of which is bound up in a liberal education. They all bear the imprimatur of the Central Government Commission for the Selection of Text-Books. That Commission is prepared to examine all books written specially for the youth of Italy, and to give its public approval of them if it finds them worthy of it. This has encouraged both authors and publishers to create such books, and they now form a very extensive school-book literature.

But there is one thing I am quite sure this Commission will never be found doing. It will never set its seal to a book that issues from the Church. Church books of all kinds are not only banished from all the National schools, but the State does what it can to prevent them falling into

the hands of children. At the annual exhibition-days, in some few villages and country places, the parish priest is allowed to preside, but he has no vote and no voice in anything. Some years ago, when I was on the Riviera, some of these priests got their old Church text-books handsomely bound, and sought to give them away as prizes in the schools. Information of this was at once sent to Signor Crispi, who was then Premier. Without delay an order was issued that no book was to be given away as a school prize which had not first received the imprimatur of the Government Educational Department, at the hands of the Commission to which I have already referred.

The reason why such text-books are thus banned, and why the youth of the country are thus guarded from contact with them, as they might be guarded from plague or leprosy, is because they are believed to be impregnated with the seeds of maladies worse than any that can attack the body. When these books deal with serious subjects, such as history, science, philosophy, and even geography, they are all arranged to suit the ends and interests of the Church. But the bulk of such books contain only trivialities, falsehoods, debilitating and debasing superstitions, gross misrepresentations of the moral qualities of actions, innuendoes and insinuations, that are productive, not of independence of thought and robustness of character, but of mental feebleness and moral delinquency; and thus a child, instead of

learning to stand upright, and to take its place as a member of the family, of society, and of the State, becomes the cringing slave and tool of the priest and of the Church.

Higher class schools and the universities underwent the same cleansing process that the elementary schools had gone through. In a former chapter ("The Church as a Political Conspiracy," p. 146), I had occasion to say that the university theological faculties were simply and entirely suppressed. That was a good beginning to a priestly clearance. It was completed when priest-professors in the remaining faculties of every university were got rid of, and lay professors installed in their places; and when many new chairs were founded, to teach subjects, such as history, political economy, and the sciences, which were banned by the Church.

There are still to be found in all parts of Italy those who can neither read nor write, but they are chiefly old people, and the number of *analfabeti* is steadily decreasing. For example, in Turin 93 per cent. can read and write, in Milan 90, in Brescia 87, in Verona 84, and in Venice 81. In places on the Riviera, from Genoa westward and eastward, the average is about 83. In Southern Italy such high averages cannot be maintained, indeed in some parts of Calabria it falls to but a little over 50 per cent., whilst in Sicily it is somewhat below that number.

Still, as everywhere, year by year, illiteracy is disappearing, I may say that education in Italy,

from its lowest to its highest grade, is in a most satisfactory and promising condition. This is further witnessed to by the flourishing condition of the learned professions (which in Italy does not, of course, include the Church); by the amount of journalistic enterprise—the daily newspaper and the illustrated periodical being circulated everywhere; by the number and variety of books that issue from Italian printing presses; by the number of Italians who, as scientists, as engineers, as inventors and discoverers, and as men of great commercial and industrial ability, are to be found in the first rank.

I began this book by an "Object Lesson," and I end it in the same way, only the "Object Lesson" is of a very different kind.

When we remember that Italy is the seat and shrine of the Papacy, and that Roman Catholicism is the Established Church of the country, and yet see how, in spite of such obstacles, it has been so changed educationally within the brief period of the last thirty years, that from being a land of darkness it has become a land of light, from being a land of ignorance it has become a land of knowledge, from being a land of intellectual stagnation it has become a land of intellectual activity, I ask if Italy does not read England an "Object Lesson" as to how it should deal with Roman Catholic lands and peoples under its sway? Wherever English rule extends, it carries every blessing in its train, and yet educationally those places I have already mentioned—Malta, and

the Roman Catholic parts of Ireland and Canada—are almost as dark now as they were a hundred years ago. Educationally, their inhabitants cannot be compared even with the recently civilised and evangelised tribes of Southern Africa ; they cannot be compared to the Christian negroes of America ; they can only be compared to the mentally benighted and degraded inhabitants of parts of Spain and Mexico.

I have just been talking on educational matters with an Englishman who has resided nearly fifty years in Malta, and with an American who spends part of every year in French Canada, and I have been reading Mr. Michael McCarthy and Mr. Hugh O'Donnell on education in Ireland ; and I cannot but think that England is false to herself and false to the trust imposed upon her by God, in leaving the education of her Roman Catholic subjects in the hands of the priests. She grievously wrongs both herself and them. Lord Macaulay, speaking of the Roman Catholic Church, in the first chapter of his *History of England*, says, that “during the last three centuries, to stunt the growth of the human mind has been her chief object. Throughout Christendom, whatever advance has been made in knowledge, in freedom, in wealth, and in the arts of life, has been made in spite of her, and has everywhere been in inverse proportion to her power. The loveliest and most fertile provinces of Europe have, under her rule, been sunk in poverty, in political servitude, and in intellectual torpor.”

There is no reason why the Maltese and Irish and Canadian Roman Catholics should not be as intelligent and happy, as educated and free, as enlightened and progressive, as the people of Italy ; but that will never be brought about until England acts in educational matters as Italy has done, and banishes priests and nuns, as teachers, from all the public schools, and priest-professors from the universities, installing in their places lay men and women, whose aim will be, not to dwarf and enslave the mind in the interests of a Church, for the very existence of which ignorance, superstition, and falsehood are essential, but to teach fully and fearlessly truth in every region of study, for the expansion of the mind, and for the giving of a wholesome, manly freedom and independence to individual thought and to individual life.

With reference to education, as with reference to every subject we have considered, as, indeed, with reference to everything that touches the interests of men and women, as human beings, as citizens, as Christians, we may say, in the words of Gambetta, "Clericalism—that is the enemy." Great Britain had to fight and conquer that enemy in the past, and she may have to do so again in the near future. Ominous events are frequently occurring that seem to presage a coming struggle. We need therefore to be prepared for it, remembering constantly, realising vividly, that the enemy we have to encounter is a deadly one, that the issue at stake is a matter of

life and death in regard to everything that is essential to the freedom and purity, the progress and felicity of the individual and of the nation.

As we see, therefore, the forces of the Papacy marshalling themselves for the combat, let the words with which the Scottish Chieftain, old Sir Andrew Agnew of Lochnaw, animated his followers, as he saw the enemy approaching, animate us: "THERE THEY ARE, LADS, AND IF YE DINNA DING THEM, THEY'LL DING YOU."

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